My Story That I Like Best

By

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Irvin S. Cobb

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Editor of Cosmopolitan

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THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED
TO
THAT GREAT NUMBER OF
INTELLIGENT
AMERICANS
WHO ARE
CONSTANT READERS
OF
COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE
IT IS SENT TO YOU
WITH THE
CORDIAL GOOD WISHES
OF THE WRITERS
AND
THE EDITOR

RAY LONG

INTRODUCTION by RAY LONG

In presenting this volume to you I am imagining that I am host for an evening. I have invited six of the distinguished writers of our time and asked them to relax over their coffee and in a mood of friendliness to discuss their own work. They have permitted me to have you sit with me and listen.

An interesting group, surely. Miss Ferber, black-haired, dark-eyed, vivid, animation itself; Irvin Cobb, tall, heavy-set, with, as his daughter says, two chins in front and a spare in the rear; Peter B. Kyne, about five foot six, with the face and figure of a well-fed priest; Jim Curwood, tall, wiry, outdoorsy in every line and movement; Nicholson, my idea of an ambassador to the Court of St. James; Harry Witwer, with the poise and quickness that one learns in the ring. (He did fight as a youngster; that's why he can make you see a prize ring when he describes it.)

Yes, an interesting group. Just as interesting to me today, after years of friendship, as to you, who may meet them for the first time. The sort of folks that wear well. The sort that

haven't been spoiled by success. For each of them realizes the simplicity of the recipe that won his success. It can be told in few words: *Think better and work harder than your competitor.*

If you get to know these authors well, you will see that that is all there has been to it: they have thought better and worked harder than the other fellow. And they are still doing it—thinking better and working harder: that's why their success endures. That's why their names are trade-marks for interesting, satisfying reading matter. As the manufacturer who establishes a trade-mark must not let his product deteriorate, lest he lose his customers, just so the successful writer must keep his product to high standard lest he lose his readers.

I have asked each of the six to tell you which of all the stories he has written he likes best, but before they begin let me tell you what inspired my request.

I grow irritated every now and then when some self-appointed critic arises to say that he has selected the best short stories for the year. What he means, of course, is that he has selected the stories which *in his opinion* are best. More often than not, his opinion is worthless; it may even be harmful. For if those studying for a career in writing accept his views,

they may be misled in what really constitutes the story of distinction.

In this discussion there will be no effort to say that these stories excel in any year. What they represent is the selection by each of six authors of his own story which he likes best of all he has written. And inasmuch as each of these writers has been years at his trade, this forms a collection not only interesting to you and myself, but informative and valuable to the student of writing.

Distinction in writing is determined by one test: endurance in public favor. Not the favor of any one or two persons, but of the great mass of readers.

A critic here and there may—and often does—select some writer of freakish material and call him a genius, but that sort of genius is short-lived.

Freakish writing never lasts. Individual manner of telling a story, yes—that is essential to distinction. But individuality that endures results from personality that pleases.

No matter how much it may interest you to see a freak in a side-show, you would not want one as a lifelong friend. No matter how much it may interest you to see a piece of freakish writing, you would not keep it handy on your

library shelves or table. As a curiosity, possibly; as a companion, never.

You will want lifelong friendship with the stories of the six writers here. They are real writing by real writers. And I am proud of the privilege of introducing you thus informally to these six writers, just as I am proud of the fact that they are such vital factors in the success of Cosmopolitan Magazine under my editorship. I think I may boast that no editor ever brought together a more distinguished group. But enough of myself and my views. Let's listen to my guests.

EDNA FERBER

FOREWORD

MOST writers lie about the way in which they came to write this or that story. I know I do. Perhaps, though, this act can't quite be classified as lying. It is not deliberate falsifying. Usually we roll a retrospective eye while weaving a fantastic confession that we actually believe to be true. It is much as when a girl says to her sweetheart, "When did you begin to love me?" and he replies, "Oh, it was the very first time I saw you, when——" etc. Which probably isn't true at all. But he thinks it is, and she wants to think it is. And that makes it almost true.

It is almost impossible to tell just how a story was born. The process is such an intricate, painful, and complicated one. Often the idea that makes up a story is only a nucleus. The finished story may represent an accumulation of years. It was so in the case of the short story entitled "The Gay Old Dog."

I like "The Gay Old Dog" better than any other short story I've written (though I've a weakness for "Old Man Minick") because it is a human story without being a sentimental one; because it presents a picture of everyday American family life; because its characters are of the type known as commonplace, and I find the commonplace infinitely more romantic and fascinating than the bizarre, the spectacular, the rich, or the poor; it is a story about a man's life, and I like to write about men;

because it is a steadily progressive thing; because its ending is inevitable.

It seems to me that I first thought of this character as short-story material (and my short stories are almost invariably founded on character, rather than on plot or situation) when I read in a Chicago newspaper that the old Windsor Hotel, a landmark, was to be torn down. The newspaper carried what is known as a feature story about this. The article told of a rather sporty old Chicago bachelor who had lived at this hotel for years. Its red plush interior represented home for him. Now he was to be turned out of his hotel refuge. The papers called him The Waif of the Loop. That part of Chicago's downtown which is encircled by the elevated tracks is known as the Loop. I thought, idly, that here was short-story material; the story of this middle-aged, well-to-do rounder whose only home was a hotel. Why had he lived there all these years? Was he happy? Why hadn't he married? I put it down in my note-book (yes, we have them)—The Waif of the Loop. Later I discarded that title as being too cumbersome and too difficult to grasp. Non-Chicagoans wouldn't know what the Loop meant.

So there it was in my note-book. A year or two went by. In all I think that story must have lain in my mind for five years before I actually wrote it. That usually is the way with a short story that is rich, deep, and true. The maturing process is slow. It ripens in the mind. In such cases the actual mechanical matter of writing is a brief business. It plumps into the hand like a juicy peach that has hung, all golden and luscious, on the tree in the sun.

From time to time I found myself setting down odd fragments related vaguely to this character. I noticed these overfed, gay-dog men of middle age whom one sees in restaurants, at the theater, accompanied, usually, by a woman younger than they—a hard, artificial, expensively gowned woman who wears a diamond bracelet so glittering that you scarcely notice the absence of ornament on the third finger of the left hand. Bits of characterization went into the note-book . . . "The kind of man who knows head waiters by name . . . the kind of man who insists on mixing his own salad dressing . . . he was always present on first nights, third row, aisle, right." I watched them. They were lonely, ponderous, pathetic, generous, wistful, drifting.

Why hadn't he married? Why hadn't he married? It's always interesting to know why people have missed such an almost universal experience as marriage. Well, he had had duties, responsibilities. Um-m-m—a mother, perhaps, and sisters. Unmarried sisters to support. The thing to do then was to ferret out some business that began to decline in about 1896 and that kept going steadily downhill. A business of the sort to pinch Jo's household and make the upkeep of two families impossible for him. It must, too, be a business that would boom suddenly, because of the War, when Jo was a middle-aged man. I heard of a man made suddenly rich in 1914 when there came a world-wide demand for leather—leather for harnesses, straps, men's wrist watches. Slowly, bit by bit, the story began to set—to solidify—to take shape.

Finally, that happened which always reassures me and makes me happy and confident. The last para-

graph of the story came to me, complete. I set down that last paragraph, in lead pencil, before the first line of the story was written. That ending literally wrote itself. I had no power over it. People have said to me: "Why didn't you make Emily a widow when they met after years of separation? Then they could have married."

The thing simply hadn't written itself that way. It was unchangeable. The end of the story and the beginning both were by now inevitable. I knew then that no matter what happened in the middle, that story would be—perhaps not a pleasant story, nor a happy one, though it might contain humor—but a story honest, truthful, courageous and human.

The GAY OLD DOG

By Edna Ferber

THOSE of you who have dwelt—or even lingered—in Chicago, Illinois (this is not a humorous story), are familiar with the region known as the Loop. For those others of you to whom Chicago is a transfer point between New York and San Francisco there is presented this brief explanation:

The Loop is a clamorous, smoke-infested district embraced by the iron arms of the elevated tracks. In a city boasting fewer millions, it would be known familiarly as downtown. From Congress to Lake Street, from Wabash almost to the river, those thunderous tracks make a complete circle, or loop. Within it lie the retail shops, the commercial hotels, the theaters, the restaurants. It is the Fifth Avenue (diluted) and the Broadway (deleted) of Chicago. And he who frequents it by night in search of amusement and cheer is known, vulgarly, as a Loop-hound.

From Edna Ferber's Cheerful by Request. Copyright, 1918, 1922, by Doubleday, Page & Co. By permission of the publishers

Jo Hertz was a Loop-hound. On the occasion of those sparse first nights granted the metropolis of the Middle West he was always present, third row, aisle, left. When a new Loop café was opened Jo's table always commanded an unobstructed view of anything worth viewing. On entering he was wont to say, "Hello, Gus," with careless cordiality to the head waiter, the while his eye roved expertly from table to table as he removed his gloves. He ordered things under glass, so that his table, at midnight or thereabouts, resembled a hotbed that favors the bell system. The waiters fought for him. He was the kind of man who mixes his own salad dressing. He liked to call for a bowl, some cracked ice, lemon, garlic, paprika, salt, pepper, vinegar, and oil and make a rite of it. People at near-by tables would lay down their knives and forks to watch, fascinated. The secret of it seemed to lie in using all the oil in sight and calling for more.

That was Jo—a plump and lonely bachelor of fifty. A plethoric, roving-eyed and kindly man, clutching vainly at the garments of a youth that had long slipped past him. Jo Hertz, in one of those pinch-waist belted suits and a trench coat and a little green hat, walking up Michigan Avenue of a bright winter's afternoon, trying to take the curb with a jaunty

youthfulness against which every one of his fat-incased muscles rebelled, was a sight for mirth or pity, depending on one's vision.

The gay-dog business was a late phase in the life of Jo Hertz. He had been a quite different sort of canine. The staid and harassed brother of three unwed and selfish sisters is an under dog. The tale of how Jo Hertz came to be a Loop-hound should not be compressed within the limits of a short story. It should be told as are the photoplays, with frequent throwbacks and many cut-ins. To condense twenty-three years of a man's life into some five or six thousand words requires a verbal economy amounting to parsimony.

At twenty-seven Jo had been the dutiful, hard-working son (in the wholesale harness business) of a widowed and gummidging mother, who called him Joey. If you had looked close you would have seen that now and then a double wrinkle would appear between Jo's eyes—a wrinkle that had no business there at twenty-seven. Then Jo's mother died, leaving him handicapped by a death-bed promise, the three sisters and a three-story-and-basement house on Calumet Avenue. Jo's wrinkle became a fixture.

Death-bed promises should be broken as lightly as they are seriously made. The dead

have no right to lay their clammy fingers upon the living.

"Joey," she had said, in her high, thin voice, "take care of the girls."

"I will, Ma," Jo had choked.

"Joey," and the voice was weaker, "promise me you won't marry till the girls are all provided for." Then as Joe had hesitated, appalled: "Joey, it's my dying wish. Promise!"

"I promise, Ma," he had said.

Whereupon his mother had died, comfortably, leaving him with a completely ruined life.

They were not bad-looking girls, and they had a certain style, too. That is, Stell and Eva had. Carrie, the middle one, taught school over on the West Side. In those days it took her almost two hours each way. She said the kind of costume she required should have been corrugated steel. But all three knew what was being worn, and they wore it—or fairly faithful copies of it. Eva, the housekeeping sister, had a needle knack. She could skim the State Street windows and come away with a mental photograph of every separate tuck, hem, yoke, and ribbon. Heads of departments showed her the things they kept in drawers, and she went home and reproduced them with the aid of a two-dollar-a-day seamstress. Stell, the youngest, was the beauty. They called her Babe. She wasn't really a beauty, but someone had once

told her that she looked like Janice Meredith (it was when that work of fiction was at the height of its popularity). For years afterward, whenever she went to parties, she affected a single, fat curl over her right shoulder, with a rose stuck through it.

Twenty-three years ago one's sisters did not strain at the household leash, nor crave a career. Carrie taught school, and hated it. Eva kept house expertly and complainingly. Babe's profession was being the family beauty, and it took all her spare time. Eva always let her sleep until ten.

This was Jo's household, and he was the nominal head of it. But it was an empty title. The three women dominated his life. They weren't consciously selfish. If you had called them cruel they would have put you down as mad. When you are the lone brother of three sisters, it means that you must constantly be calling for, escorting, or dropping one of them somewhere. Most men of Jo's age were standing before their mirror of a Saturday night, whistling blithely and abstractedly while they discarded a blue polka-dot for a maroon tie, whipped off the maroon for a shot-silk, and at the last moment decided against a shot-silk, in favor of a plain black-and-white, because she had once said she preferred quiet ties. Jo, when

he should have been preening his feathers for conquest, was saying:

"Well, my God, I *am* hurrying! Give a man time, can't you? I just got home. You girls have been laying around the house all day. No wonder you're ready."

He took a certain pride in seeing his sisters well dressed, at a time when he should have been reveling in fancy waistcoats and brilliant-hued socks, according to the style of that day, and the inalienable right of any unwed male under thirty, in any day. On those rare occasions when his business necessitated an out-of-town trip, he would spend half a day floundering about the shops selecting handkerchiefs, or stockings, or feathers, or fans, or gloves for the girls. They always turned out to be the wrong kind, judging by their reception.

From Carrie, "What in the world do I want of a fan!"

"I thought you didn't have one," Jo would say.

"I haven't. I never go to dances."

Jo would pass a futile hand over the top of his head, as was his way when disturbed. "I just thought you'd like one. I thought every girl liked a fan. Just," feebly, "just to—to have."

"Oh, for pity's sake!"

And from Eva or Babe, "I've *got* silk stock-

ings, Jo." Or, "You brought me handkerchiefs the last time."

There was something selfish in his giving, as there always is in any gift freely and joyfully made. They never suspected the exquisite pleasure it gave him to select these things; these fine, soft, silken things. There were many things about this slow-going, amiable brother of theirs that they never suspected. If you had told them he was a dreamer of dreams, for example, they would have been amused. Sometimes, dead-tired by nine o'clock, after a hard day downtown, he would doze over the evening paper. At intervals he would wake, red-eyed, to a snatch of conversation such as, "Yes, but if you get a blue you can wear it anywhere. It's dressy, and at the same time it's quiet, too." Eva, the expert, wrestling with Carrie over the problem of the new spring dress. They never guessed that the commonplace man in the frayed old smoking-jacket had banished them all from the room long ago; had banished himself, for that matter. In his place was a tall, debonair, and rather dangerously handsome man to whom six o'clock spelled evening clothes. The kind of man who can lean up against a mantel, or propose a toast, or give an order to a man-servant, or whisper a gallant speech in a lady's ear with equal ease. The shabby old house on Calumet Avenue was

transformed into a brocaded and chandeliered rendezvous for the brilliance of the city. Beauty was here, and wit. But none so beautiful and witty as She. Mrs.—er—Jo Hertz. There was wine, of course; but no vulgar display. There was music; the soft sheen of satin; laughter. And he the gracious, tactful host, king of his own domain——

"Jo, for heaven's sake, if you're going to snore, go to bed!"

"Why—did I fall asleep?"

"You haven't been doing anything else all evening. A person would think you were fifty instead of thirty."

And Jo Hertz was again just the dull, gray, commonplace brother of three well-meaning sisters.

Babe used to say petulantly: "Jo, why don't you ever bring home any of your men friends? A girl might as well not have any brother, all the good you do."

Jo, conscience-stricken, did his best to make amends. But a man who has been petticoat-ridden for years loses the knack, somehow, of comradeship with men. He acquires, too, a knowledge of women, and a distaste for them, equaled only, perhaps, by that of an elevator-starter in a department store.

Which brings us to one Sunday in May. Jo came home from a late Sunday afternoon walk

to find company for supper. Carrie often had in one of her school-teacher friends, or Babe one of her frivolous intimates, or even Eva a staid guest of the old-girl type. There was always a Sunday night supper of potato salad, and cold meat, and coffee, and perhaps a fresh cake. Jo rather enjoyed it, being a hospitable soul. But he regarded the guests with the undazzled eyes of a man to whom they were just so many petticoats, timid of the night streets and requiring escort home. If you had suggested to him that some of his sisters' popularity was due to his own presence, or if you had hinted that the more kittenish of these visitors were probably making eyes at him, he would have stared in amazement and unbelief.

This Sunday night it turned out to be one of Carrie's friends.

"Emily," said Carrie, "this is my brother, Jo."

Jo had learned what to expect in Carrie's friends. Drab-looking women in the late thirties, whose facial lines all slanted downward.

"Happy to meet you," said Jo, and looked down at a different sort altogether. A most surprisingly different sort, for one of Carrie's friends. This Emily person was very small, and fluffy, and blue-eyed, and sort of—well, crinkly-looking. You know. The corners of her mouth when she smiled, and her eyes when she

looked up at you, and her hair, which was brown, but had the miraculous effect, somehow, of being golden.

Jo shook hands with her. Her hand was incredibly small, and soft, so that you were afraid of crushing it, until you discovered she had a firm little grip all her own. It surprised and amused you, that grip, as does a baby's unexpected clutch on your patronizing forefinger. As Jo felt it in his own big clasp, the strangest thing happened to him. Something inside Jo Hertz stopped working for a moment, then lurched sickeningly, then thumped like mad. It was his heart. He stood staring down at her, and she up at him, until the others laughed. Then their hands fell apart, lingeringly.

"Are you a school-teacher, Emily?" he said.

"Kindergarten. It's my first year. And don't call me Emily, please."

"Why not? It's your name. I think it's the prettiest name in the world." Which he hadn't meant to say at all. In fact, he was perfectly aghast to find himself saying it. But he meant it.

At supper he passed her things, and stared, until everybody laughed again, and Eva said acidly, "Why don't you feed her?"

It wasn't that Emily had an air of helpless-

ness. She just made you feel you wanted her to be helpless, so that you could help her.

Jo took her home, and from that Sunday night he began to strain at the leash. He took his sisters out, dutifully, but he would suggest, with a carelessness that deceived no one, "Don't you want one of your girl friends to come along? That little What's-her-name—Emily, or something. So long's I've got three of you, I might as well have a full squad."

For a long time he didn't know what was the matter with him. He only knew he was miserable, and yet happy. Sometimes his heart seemed to ache with an actual physical ache. He realized that he wanted to do things for Emily. He wanted to buy things for Emily —useless, pretty, expensive things that he couldn't afford. He wanted to buy everything that Emily needed, and everything that Emily desired. He wanted to marry Emily. That was it. He discovered that one day, with a shock, in the midst of a transaction in the harness business. He stared at the man with whom he was dealing until that startled person grew uncomfortable.

"What's the matter, Hertz?"

"Matter?"

"You look as if you'd seen a ghost or found a gold mine. I don't know which."

"Gold mine," said Jo. And then, "No. Ghost."

For he remembered that high, thin voice, and his promise. And the harness business was slithering downhill with dreadful rapidity, as the automobile business began its amazing climb. Jo tried to stop it. But he was not that kind of business man. It never occurred to him to jump out of the down-going vehicle and catch the up-going one. He stayed on, vainly applying brakes that refused to work.

"You know, Emily, I couldn't support two households now. Not the way things are. But if you'll wait. If you'll only wait. The girls might—that is, Babe and Carrie——"

She was a sensible little thing, Emily. "Of course I'll wait. But we mustn't just sit back and let the years go by. We've got to help."

She went about it as if she were already a little match-making matron. She corralled all the men she had ever known and introduced them to Babe, Carrie, and Eva separately, in pairs, and *en masse*. She arranged parties at which Babe could display the curl. She got up picnics. She stayed home while Jo took the three about. When she was present she tried to look as plain and obscure as possible, so that the sisters should show up to advantage. She schemed, and planned, and contrived, and hoped; and smiled into Jo's despairing eyes.

And three years went by. Three precious years. Carrie still taught school, and hated it. Eva kept house, more and more complainingly as prices advanced and allowance retreated. Stell was still Babe, the family beauty; but even she knew that the time was past for curls. Emily's hair, somehow, lost its glint and began to look just plain brown. Her crinkliness began to iron out.

"Now, look here!" Jo argued, desperately, one night. "We could be happy, anyway. There's plenty of room at the house. Lots of people begin that way. Of course, I couldn't give you all I'd like to, at first. But maybe, after a while——"

No dreams of salons, and brocade, and velvet-footed servitors, and satin damask now. Just two rooms, all their own, all alone, and Emily to work for. That was his dream. But it seemed less possible than that other absurd one had been.

You know that Emily was as practical a little thing as she looked fluffy. She knew women. Especially did she know Eva, and Carrie, and Babe. She tried to imagine herself taking the household affairs and the housekeeping pocketbook out of Eva's expert hands. Eva had once displayed to her a sheaf of aigrettes she had bought with what she saved out of the housekeeping money. So then she tried to picture

herself allowing the reins of Jo's house to remain in Eva's hands. And everything feminine and normal in her rebelled. Emily knew she'd want to put away her own freshly laundered linen, and smooth it, and pat it. She was that kind of woman. She knew she'd want to do her own delightful haggling with butcher and vegetable peddler. She knew she'd want to muss Jo's hair, and sit on his knee, and even quarrel with him, if necessary, without the awareness of three ever-present pairs of maiden eyes and ears.

"No! No! We'd only be miserable. I know. Even if they didn't object. And they would, Jo. Wouldn't they?"

His silence was miserable assent. Then, "But you do love me, don't you, Emily?"

"I do, Jo. I love you—and love you—and love you. But, Jo, I—can't."

"I know it, dear. I knew it all the time, really. I just thought, maybe, somehow——"

The two sat staring for a moment into space, their hands clasped. Then they both shut their eyes, with a little shudder, as though what they saw was terrible to look upon. Emily's hand, the tiny hand that was so unexpectedly firm, tightened its hold on his, and his crushed the absurd fingers until she winced with pain.

That was the beginning of the end, and they knew it.

Emily wasn't the kind of girl who would be left to pine. There are too many Jo's in the world whose hearts are prone to lurch and then thump at the feel of a soft, fluttering, incredibly small hand in their grip. One year later Emily was married to a young man whose father owned a large, pie-shaped slice of the prosperous state of Michigan.

That being safely accomplished, there was something grimly humorous in the trend taken by affairs in the old house on Calumet. For Eva married. Of all people, Eva! Married well, too, though he was a great deal older than she. She went off in a hat she had copied from a French model at Field's, and a suit she had contrived with a home dressmaker, aided by pressing on the part of the little tailor in the basement over on Thirty-first Street. It was the last of that, though. The next time they saw her, she had on a hat that even she would have despaired of copying, and a suit that sort of melted into your gaze. She moved to the North Side (trust Eva for that), and Babe assumed the management of the household on Calumet Avenue. It was rather a pinched little household now, for the harness business shrank and shrank.

"I don't see how you can expect me to keep house decently on this!" Babe would say contemptuously. Babe's nose, always a little in-

clined to sharpness, had whittled down to a point of late. "If you knew what Ben gives Eva."

"It's the best I can do, Sis. Business is something rotten."

"Ben says if you had the least bit of——" Ben was Eva's husband, and quotable, as are all successful men.

"I don't care what Ben says," shouted Jo, goaded into rage. "I'm sick of your everlasting Ben. Go and get a Ben of your own, why don't you, if you're so stuck on the way he does things."

And Babe did. She made a last desperate drive, aided by Eva, and she captured a rather surprised young man in the brokerage way, who had made up his mind not to marry for years and years. Eva wanted to give her her wedding things, but at that Jo broke into sudden rebellion.

"No, sir! No Ben is going to buy my sister's wedding clothes, understand? I guess I'm not broke—yet. I'll furnish the money for her things, and there'll be enough of them, too."

Babe had as useless a trousseau, and as filled with extravagant pink-and-blue and lacy and frilly things as any daughter of doting parents. Jo seemed to find a grim pleasure in providing them. But it left him pretty well pinched. After Babe's marriage (she insisted that they

call her Estelle now) Jo sold the house on Calumet. He and Carrie took one of those little flats that were springing up, seemingly overnight, all through Chicago's South Side.

There was nothing domestic about Carrie. She had given up teaching two years before, and had gone into Social Service work on the West Side. She had what is known as a legal mind —hard, clear, orderly—and she made a great success of it. Her dream was to live at the Settlement House and give all her time to the work. Upon the little household she bestowed a certain amount of grim, capable attention. It was the same kind of attention she would have given a piece of machinery whose oiling and running had been entrusted to her care. She hated it, and didn't hesitate to say so.

Jo took to prowling about department store basements, and household goods sections. He was always sending home a bargain in a ham, or a sack of potatoes, or fifty pounds of sugar, or a window clamp, or a new kind of paring knife. He was forever doing odd little jobs that the janitor should have done. It was the domestic in him claiming its own.

Then, one night, Carrie came home with a dull glow in her leathery cheeks, and her eyes alight with resolve. They had what she called a plain talk.

"Listen, Jo. They've offered me the job of

first assistant resident worker. And I'm going to take it. Take it! I know fifty other girls who'd give their ears for it. I go in next month."

They were at dinner. Jo looked up from his plate, dully. Then he glanced around the little dining-room, with its ugly tan walls and its heavy, dark furniture (the Calumet Avenue pieces fitted cumbersomely into the five-room flat).

"Away? Away from here, you mean—to live?"

Carrie laid down her fork. "Well, really, Jo! After all that explanation."

"But to go over there to live! Why, that neighborhood's full of dirt, and disease, and crime, and the Lord knows what all. I can't let you do that, Carrie."

Carrie's chin came up. She laughed a short little laugh. "Let me! That's eighteenth-century talk, Jo. My life's my own to live. I'm going."

And she went.

Jo stayed on in the apartment until the lease was up. Then he sold what furniture he could, stored or gave away the rest, and took a room on Michigan Avenue in one of the old stone mansions whose decayed splendor was being put to such purpose.

Jo Hertz was his own master. Free to

marry. Free to come and go. And he found he didn't even think of marrying. He didn't even want to come or go, particularly. A rather frumpy old bachelor, with thinning hair and a thickening neck. Much has been written about the unwed, middle-aged woman; her fussiness, her primness, her angularity of mind and body. In the male that same fussiness develops, and a certain primness, too. But he grows flabby where she grows lean.

Every Thursday evening he took dinner at Eva's, and on Sunday noon at Stell's. He tucked his napkin under his chin and openly enjoyed the home-made soup and the well-cooked meats. After dinner he tried to talk business with Eva's husband, or Stell's. His business talks were the old-fashioned kind, beginning:

"Well, now, looka here. Take, f'rinstance your rawhides and leathers."

But Ben and George didn't want to "take, f'rinstance, your rawhides and leathers." They wanted, when they took anything at all, to take golf or politics or stocks. They were the modern type of business man who prefers to leave his work out of his play. Business, with them, was a profession—a finely graded and balanced thing, differing from Jo's clumsy, downhill style as completely as does the method of a great criminal detective differ from that

of a village constable. They would listen, restively, and say, "Uh-uh," at intervals, and at the first chance they would sort of fade out of the room, with a meaning glance at their wives. Eva had two children now. Girls. They treated Uncle Jo with good-natured tolerance. Stell had no children. Uncle Jo degenerated, by almost imperceptible degrees, from the position of honored guest, who is served with white meat, to that of one who is content with a leg and one of those obscure and bony sections which, after much turning with a bewildered and investigating knife and fork, leave one baffled and unsatisfied.

Eva and Stell got together and decided that Jo ought to marry.

"It isn't natural," Eva told him. "I never saw a man who took so little interest in women."

"Me!" protested Jo, almost shyly. "Women."

"Yes. Of course. You act like a frightened schoolboy."

So they had in for dinner certain friends and acquaintances of fitting age. They spoke of them as "splendid girls." Between thirty-six and forty. They talked awfully well, in a firm, clear way, about civics, and classes, and politics, and economics, and boards. They rather terrified Jo. He didn't understand much that they talked about, and he felt humbly inferior, and

yet a little resentful, as if something had passed him by. He escorted them home, dutifully, though they told him not to bother, and they evidently meant it. They seemed capable, not only of going home quite unattended, but of delivering a pointed lecture to any highwayman or brawler who might molest them.

The following Thursday Eva would say, "How did you like her, Jo?"

"Like who?" Jo would spar feebly.

"Miss Matthews."

"Who's she?"

"Now, don't be funny, Jo. You know very well I mean the girl who was here for dinner. The one who talked so well on the immigration question."

"Oh, her! Why, I liked her all right. Seems to be a smart woman."

"Smart! She's a perfectly splendid girl."

"Sure," Jo would agree cheerfully.

"But didn't you like her?"

"I can't say I did, Eve. And I can't say I didn't. She made me think a lot of a teacher I had in the fifth reader. Name of Himes. As I recall her, she must have been a fine woman. But I never thought of her as a woman at all. She was just Teacher."

"You make me tired," snapped Eva impatiently. "A man of your age. You don't expect to marry a girl, do you? A child!"

"I don't expect to marry anybody," Jo had answered.

And that was the truth, lonely though he often was.

The following spring Eva moved to Winnetka. Anyone who got the meaning of the Loop knows the significance of a move to a North Shore suburb, and a house. Eva's daughter, Ethel, was growing up, and her mother had an eye on society.

That did away with Jo's Thursday dinner. Then Stell's husband bought a car. They went out into the country every Sunday. Stell said it was getting so that maids objected to Sunday dinners, anyway. Besides, they were unhealthy, old-fashioned things. They always meant to ask Jo to come along, but by the time their friends were placed, and the lunch, and the boxes, and sweaters, and George's camera, and everything, there seemed to be no room for a man of Jo's bulk. So that eliminated the Sunday dinners.

"Just drop in any time during the week," Stell said, "for dinner. Except Wednesday—that's our bridge night—and Saturday. And, of course, Thursday. Cook is out that night. Don't wait for me to phone."

And so Jo drifted into that sad-eyed, dyspeptic family made up of those you see dining in second-rate restaurants, their paper propped

up against the bowl of oyster crackers, munching solemnly and with indifference to the stare of the passer-by surveying them through the brazen plate-glass window.

And then came the War. The war that spelled death and destruction to millions. The war that brought a fortune to Jo Hertz, and transformed him, overnight, from a baggy-kneed old bachelor, whose business was a failure, to a prosperous manufacturer whose only trouble was the shortage in hides for the making of his product—leather! The armies of Europe called for it. Harnesses! More harnesses! Straps! Millions of straps. More! More!

The musty old harness business over on Lake Street was magically changed from a dust-covered, dead-alive concern to an orderly hive that hummed and glittered with success. Orders poured in. Jo Hertz had inside information on the War. He knew about troops and horses. He talked with French and English and Italian buyers—noblemen, many of them—commissioned by their countries to get American-made supplies. And now, when he said to Ben and George "Take f'rinstance your rawhides and leathers," they listened with respectful attention.

And then began the gay-dog business in the life of Jo Hertz. He developed into a Loop-

hound, ever keen on the scent of fresh pleasure. That side of Jo Hertz which had been repressed and crushed and ignored began to bloom, unhealthily. At first he spent money on his rather contemptuous nieces. He sent them gorgeous fans, and watch bracelets, and velvet bags. He took two expensive rooms at a downtown hotel, and there was something more tear-compelling than grotesque about the way he gloated over the luxury of a separate ice-water tap in the bathroom. He explained it.

"Just turn it on. Ice-water! Any hour of the day or night."

He bought a car. Naturally. A glittering affair; in color a bright blue, with pale blue leather straps and a great deal of gold fittings, and wire wheels. Eva said it was the kind of thing a soubrette would use, rather than an elderly business man. You saw him driving about in it, red-faced and rather awkward at the wheel. You saw him, too, in the Pompeian room at the Congress Hotel of a Saturday afternoon when doubtful and roving-eyed matrons in kolinsky capes are wont to congregate to sip pale amber drinks. Actors grew to recognize the semi-bald head and the shining, round, good-natured face looming out at them from the dim well of the parquet, and sometimes, in a musical show, they directed a quip at him, and he liked it. He could pick out the

critics as they came down the aisle, and even had a nodding acquaintance with two of them.

"Kelly, of the *Herald*," he would say carelessly. "Bean, of the *Trib*. They're all afraid of him."

So he frolicked, ponderously. In New York he might have been called a Man About Town.

And he was lonesome. He was very lonesome. So he searched about in his mind and brought from the dim past the memory of the luxuriously furnished establishment of which he used to dream in the evenings when he dozed over his paper in the old house on Calumet. So he rented an apartment, many-roomed and expensive, with a man-servant in charge, and furnished it in styles and periods ranging through all the Louis's. The living-room was mostly rose-color. It was like an unhealthy and bloated boudoir. And yet there was nothing sybaritic or uncleanly in the sight of this paunchy, middle-aged man sinking into the rosy-cushioned luxury of his ridiculous home. It was a frank and naïve indulgence of long-starved senses, and there was in it a great resemblance to the rolling-eyed ecstasy of a schoolboy smacking his lips over an all-day sucker.

The War went on, and on, and on. And the money continued to roll in—a flood of it. Then, one afternoon, Eva, in town on shopping bent, entered a small, exclusive, and expensive shop

on Michigan Avenue. Exclusive, that is, in price. Eva's weakness, you may remember, was hats. She was seeking a hat now. She described what she sought with a languid conciseness, and stood looking about her after the saleswoman had vanished in quest of it. The room was becomingly rose-illumined and somewhat dim, so that some minutes had passed before she realized that a man seated on a raspberry brocade settee not five feet away—a man with a walking stick, and yellow gloves, and tan spats, and a check suit—was her brother Jo. From him Eva's wild-eyed glance leaped to the woman who was trying on hats before one of the many long mirrors. She was seated, and a saleswoman was exclaiming discreetly at her elbow.

Eva turned sharply and encountered her own saleswoman returning, hat-laden. "Not today," she gasped. "I'm feeling ill. Suddenly." And almost ran from the room.

That evening she told Stell, relating her news in that telephone pidgin-English devised by every family of married sisters as protection against the neighbors and Central. Translated, it ran thus:

"He looked straight at me. My dear, I thought I'd die! But at least he had sense enough not to speak. She was one of those limp, willowy creatures with the greediest eyes

that she tried to keep softened to a baby stare, and couldn't, she was so crazy to get her hands on those hats. I saw it all in one awful minute. You know the way I do. I suppose some people would call her pretty. I don't. And her color! Well! And the most expensive-looking hats. Aigrettes, and paradise, and feathers. Not one of them under seventy-five. Isn't it disgusting! At his age! Suppose Ethel had been with me!"

The next time it was Stell who saw them. In a restaurant. She said it spoiled her evening. And the third time it was Ethel. She was one of the guests at a theater party given by Nicky Overton II. You know. The North Shore Overtons. Lake Forest. They came in late, and occupied the entire third row at the opening performance of "Believe Me!" And Ethel was Nicky's partner. She was growing like a rose. When the lights went up after the first act Ethel saw that her uncle Jo was seated just ahead of her with what she afterward described as a blonde. Then her uncle had turned around, and seeing her, had been surprised into a smile that spread genially all over his plump and rubicund face. Then he had turned to face forward again, quickly.

"Who's the old bird?" Nicky had asked. Ethel had pretended not to hear, so he had asked again.

"My uncle," Ethel answered, and flushed

all over her delicate face, and down to her throat. Nicky had looked at the blonde, and his eyebrows had gone up ever so slightly.

It spoiled Ethel's evening. More than that, as she told her mother of it later, weeping, she declared it had spoiled her life.

Eva talked it over with her husband in that intimate, kimonoed hour that precedes bedtime. She gesticulated heatedly with her hair brush.

"It's disgusting, that's what it is. Perfectly disgusting. There's no fool like an old fool. Imagine! A creature like that. At his time of life."

There exists a strange and loyal kinship among men. "Well, I don't know," Ben said now, and even grinned a little. "I suppose a boy's got to sow his wild oats sometime."

"Don't be any more vulgar than you can help," Eva retorted. "And I think you know, as well as I, what it means to have that Overton boy interested in Ethel."

"If he's interested in her," Ben blundered, "I guess the fact that Ethel's uncle went to the theater with someone who wasn't Ethel's aunt won't cause a shudder to run up and down his frail young frame, will it?"

"All right," Eva had retorted. "If you're not man enough to stop it, I'll have to, that's all. I'm going up there with Stell this week."

They did not notify Jo of their coming. Eva

telephoned his apartment when she knew he would be out, and asked his man if he expected his master home to dinner that evening. The man had said yes. Eva arranged to meet Stell in town. They would drive to Jo's apartment together, and wait for him there.

When she reached the city Eva found turmoil there. The first of the American troops to be sent to France were leaving. Michigan Boulevard was a billowing, surging mass: Flags, pennants, banners, crowds. All the elements that make for demonstration. And over the whole—quiet. No holiday crowd, this. A solid, determined mass of people waiting patient hours to see the khaki-clads go by. Three years of indefatigable reading had brought them to a clear knowledge of what these boys were going to.

"Isn't it dreadful!" Stell gasped.

"Nicky Overton's only nineteen, thank goodness." Their car was caught in the jam. When they moved at all it was by inches. When at last they reached Jo's apartment they were flushed, nervous, apprehensive. But he had not yet come in. So they waited.

No, they were not staying to dinner with their brother, they told the relieved houseman.

Jo's home has already been described to you. Stell and Eva, sunk in rose-colored cushions,

viewed it with disgust, and some mirth. They rather avoided each other's eyes.

"Carrie ought to be here," Eva said. They both smiled at the thought of the austere Carrie in the midst of those rosy cushions, and hangings, and lamps. Stell rose and began to walk about, restlessly. She picked up a vase and laid it down; straightened a picture. Eva got up, too, and wandered into the hall. She stood there a moment, listening. Then she turned and passed into Jo's bedroom. And there you knew Jo for what he was.

This room was as bare as the other had been ornate. It was Jo, the clean-minded and simple-hearted, in revolt against the cloying luxury with which he had surrounded himself. The bedroom, of all rooms in any house, reflects the personality of its occupant. True, the actual furniture was paneled, cupid-surmounted, and ridiculous. It had been the fruit of Jo's first orgy of the senses. But now it stood out in that stark little room with an air as incongruous and ashamed as that of a pink tarleton *danseuse* who finds herself in a monk's cell. None of those wall-pictures with which bachelor bedrooms are reputed to be hung. No satin slippers. No scented notes. Two plain-backed military brushes on the chiffonier (and he so nearly hairless!). A little orderly stack of books on the table near the bed. Eva fingered

their titles and gave a little gasp. One of them was on gardening.

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed Stell. A book on the War, by an Englishman. A detective story of the lurid type that lulls us to sleep. His shoes ranged in a careful row in the closet, with a shoe-tree in every one of them. There was something speaking about them. They looked so human. Eva shut the door on them, quickly. Some bottles on the dresser. A jar of pomade. An ointment such as a man uses who is growing bald and is panic-stricken too late. An insurance calendar on the wall. Some rhubarb-and-soda mixture on the shelf in the bathroom, and a little box of pepsin tablets.

"Eats all kinds of things at all hours of the night," Eva said, and wandered out into the rose-colored front room again with the air of one who is chagrined at her failure to find what she has sought. Stell followed her furtively.

"Where do you suppose he can be?" she demanded. "It's"—she glanced at her wrist—"why, it's after six!"

And then there was a little click. The two women sat up, tense. The door opened. Jo came in. He blinked a little. The two women in the rosy room stood up.

"Why—Eve! Why, Babe! Well! Why didn't you let me know?"

"We were just about to leave. We thought you weren't coming home."

Jo came in, slowly.

"I was in the jam on Michigan, watching the boys go by." He sat down, heavily. The light from the window fell on him. And you saw that his eyes were red.

And you'll have to learn why. He had found himself one of the thousands in the jam on Michigan Avenue, as he said. He had a place near the curb, where his big frame shut off the view of the unfortunates behind him. He waited with the placid interest of one who has subscribed to all the funds and societies to which a prosperous, middle-aged business man is called upon to subscribe in war time. Then, just as he was about to leave, impatient at the delay, the crowd had cried, with a queer dramatic, exultant note in its voice, "Here they come! Here come the boys!"

Just at that moment two little, futile, frenzied fists began to beat a mad tattoo on Jo Hertz's broad back. Jo tried to turn in the crowd, all indignant resentment. "Say, looka here!"

The little fists kept up their frantic beating and pushing. And a voice—a choked, high little voice—cried: "Let me by! I can't see! You man, you! You big fat man! My boy's going by—to war—and I can't see! Let me by!"

Jo scrooged around, still keeping his place. He looked down. And upturned to him in agonized appeal was the face of little Emily. They stared at each other for what seemed a long, long time. It was really only the fraction of a second. Then Jo put one great arm firmly around Emily's waist and swung her around in front of him. His great bulk protected her. Emily was clinging to his hand. She was breathing rapidly, as if she had been running. Her eyes were straining up the street.

"Why, Emily, how in the world——"

"I ran away. Fred didn't want me to come. He said it would excite me too much."

"Fred?"

"My husband. He made me promise to say good-by to Jo at home."

"Jo?"

"Jo's my boy. And he's going to war. So I ran away. I had to see him. I had to see him go."

She was dry-eyed. Her gaze was straining up the street.

"Why, sure," said Jo. "Of course you want to see him." And then the crowd gave a great roar. There came over Jo a feeling of weakness. He was trembling. The boys went marching by.

"There he is," Emily shrilled, above the din. "There he is! There he is! There

he——" And waved a futile little hand. It wasn't so much a wave as a clutching. A clutching after something beyond her reach.

"Which one? Which one, Emily?"

"The handsome one. The handsome one. There!" Her voice quavered and died.

Jo put a steady hand on her shoulder. "Point him out," he commanded. "Show me." And the next instant: "Never mind. I see him."

Somehow, miraculously, he had picked him from among the hundreds. Had picked him as surely as his own father might have. It was Emily's boy. He was marching by, rather stiffly. He was nineteen, and fun-loving, and he had a girl, and he didn't particularly want to go to France and—to go to France. But more than he had hated going, he had hated not to go. So he marched by, looking straight ahead, his jaw set so that his chin stuck out just a little. Emily's boy.

Jo looked at him, and his face flushed purple. His eyes, the hard-boiled eyes of a Loop-hound, took on the look of a sad old man. And suddenly he was no longer Jo, the sport; old J. Hertz, the gay dog. He was Jo Hertz, thirty, in love with life, in love with Emily, and with the stinging blood of young manhood coursing through his veins.

Another minute and the boy had passed on up the broad street—the fine, flag-bedecked

street—just one of a hundred service-hats bobbing in rhythmic motion like sandy waves lapping a shore and flowing on.

Then he disappeared altogether.

Emily was clinging to Jo. She was mumbling something, over and over. "I can't. I can't. Don't ask me to. I can't let him go. Like that. I can't."

Jo said a queer thing.

"Why, Emily! We wouldn't have him stay home, would we? We wouldn't want him to do anything different, would we? Not our boy. I'm glad he enlisted. I'm proud of him. So are you glad."

Little by little he quieted her. He took her to the car that was waiting, a worried chauffeur in charge. They said good-by, awkwardly. Emily's face was a red, swollen mass.

So it was that when Jo entered his own hallway half an hour later he blinked, dazedly, and when the light from the window fell on him you saw that his eyes were red.

Eva was not one to beat about the bush. She sat forward in her chair, clutching her bag rather nervously.

"Now, look here, Jo. Stell and I are here for a reason. We're here to tell you that this thing's got to stop."

"Thing? Stop?"

"You know very well what I mean. You

saw me at the milliner's that day. And night before last, Ethel. We're all disgusted. If you must go about with people like that, please have some sense of decency."

Something gathering in Jo's face should have warned her. But he was slumped down in his chair in such a huddle, and he looked so old and fat that she did not heed it. She went on. "You've got us to consider. Your sisters. And your nieces. Not to speak of your own——"

But he got to his feet then, shaking, and at what she saw in his face even Eva faltered and stopped. It wasn't at all the face of a fat, middle-aged sport. It was a face Jovian, terrible.

"You!" he began, low-voiced, ominous. "You!" He raised a great fist high. "You two murderers! You didn't consider me, twenty years ago. You come to me with talk like that. Where's my boy! You killed him, you two, twenty years ago. And now he belongs to somebody else. Where's my son that should have gone marching by today?" He flung his arms out in a great gesture of longing. The red veins stood out on his forehead. "Where's my son! Answer me that, you two selfish, miserable women. Where's my son!" Then, as they huddled together, frightened, wild-eyed: "Out of my house! Out of my house! Before I hurt you!"

They fled, terrified. The door banged behind them.

Jo stood, shaking, in the center of the room. Then he reached for a chair, gropingly, and sat down. He passed one moist, flabby hand over his forehead and it came away wet. The telephone rang. He sat still. It sounded far away and unimportant, like something forgotten. I think he did not even hear it with his conscious ear. But it rang and rang insistently. Jo liked to answer his telephone, when at home.

"Hello!" He knew instantly the voice at the other end.

"That you, Jo?" it said.

"Yes."

"How's my boy?"

"I'm—all right."

"Listen, Jo. The crowd's coming over tonight. I've fixed up a little poker game for you. Just eight of us."

"I can't come tonight, Gert."

"Can't! Why not?"

"I'm not feeling so good."

"You just said you were all right."

"I *am* all right. Just kind of tired."

The voice took on a cooing note. "Is my Joey tired? Then he shall be all comfy on the sofa, and he doesn't need to play if he don't want to. No, sir."

Jo stood staring at the black mouthpiece of

the telephone. He was seeing a procession go marching by. Boys, hundreds of boys, in khaki.

"Hello! Hello!" The voice took on an anxious note. "Are you there?"

"Yes," wearily.

"Jo, there's something the matter. You're sick. I'm coming right over."

"No!"

"Why not? You sound as if you'd been sleeping. Look here——"

"Leave me alone!" cried Jo, suddenly, and the receiver clacked onto the hook. "Leave me alone. Leave me alone." Long after the connection had been broken.

He stood staring at the instrument with unseeing eyes. Then he turned and walked into the front room. All the light had gone out of it. Dusk had come on. All the light had gone out of everything. The zest had gone out of life. The game was over—the game he had been playing against loneliness and disappointment. And he was just a tired old man. A lonely, tired old man in a ridiculous, rose-colored room that had grown, all of a sudden, drab.

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IRVIN S. COBB

FOREWORD

MY favorite short story of all the short stories I have written is "The Escape of Mr. Trimm." It was the first piece of avowed fiction I wrote. It was written more than twelve years ago.

At the time, I was on the city staff of the New York Evening World. I was a reasonably busy person in those days. I did assignments, both special and ordinary; I handled my share of the "re-write"—that is, the building, inside the office, of news-stories based on details telephoned in by "leg men" or outside workers; I covered most of the big criminal trials that coincidentally took place; I wrote a page of alleged humor for the color section of the Sunday World and for the McClure syndicate; and every week I turned out a given number of shorter and also supposedly humorous articles for the magazine page of the Evening World.

In the run of my contemporaneous duties I was detailed to report the trial, in Federal Court, of a famous financier. This trial lasted several weeks. What most deeply impressed me was the bearing of the accused man. Although he had distinguished counsel, he practically conducted his own defense. When the jurors came in with a verdict of guilty and the judge sentenced him to a long term of imprisonment at hard labor, he kept his nerve and his wits. I said to myself that this man

would never serve out his sentence; he was too smart for that; he would find a way to beat the law, even though his appeals were denied. And he did.

On the concluding day of the trial I fell to wondering just what possibly could defeat the will of such a man as this man was. At once a notion jumped into my head and, then and there, sitting at the reporters' table, I decided to write a story focusing about this central idea.

I had written fiction before—every reporter has—fiction masquerading as the lighter side of the news. But I said to myself that this story should be out-and-out fiction. Such small reputation as I had as a special writer largely was founded on my efforts at humor. But I made up my mind that this story should contain no humor at all.

Not until six months had passed did I get my chance. In the following summer I went on my annual vacation of two weeks. In the concluding two days of that vacation I wrote the first draft of the yarn, and, back at the shop, in odd moments, I wrote it over again, making, though, only a few changes in the original text, and none at all in the sequence of imaginary events.

I sent the manuscript to Mr. George Horace Lorimer, Editor of the Saturday Evening Post. He accepted it and invited me to submit other manuscripts to him. But I had to wait another full year—until vacation time came again—before there was opportunity for any more short-story writing. Then I did two more stories. Mr. Lorimer bought them both, and thereby I was encouraged to give up my newspaper job, with its guarantee of a

pay envelope every Saturday, for the less certain but highly alluring rôle of a free-lance contributor to weekly and monthly periodicals.

Maybe I like "The Escape of Mr. Trimm" best of all my stories because it was this story which opened the door for me into magazine work. A writer's estimate of his own output rarely agrees with the judgment of his friends. But, after a period of consideration, after weighing this against that, after trying to forget what some of the professional reviewers have had to say about certain of my efforts, and striving instead to remember only what more gentle critics, out of the goodness of the heart, sometimes have told me, I still find myself committed to the belief that the story which appears in this volume is—so far as my prejudiced opinion goes—the best story I have ever written.

The ESCAPE *of* MR. TRIMM

BY IRVIN S. COBB

MR. TRIMM, recently president of the late Thirteenth National Bank, was taking a trip which was different in a number of ways from any he had ever taken. To begin with, he was used to parlor cars and Pullmans and even luxurious private cars when he went anywhere; whereas now he rode with a most mixed company in a dusty, smelly day coach. In the second place, his traveling companion was not such a one as Mr. Trimm would have chosen had the choice been left to him, being a stupid-looking German-American with a drooping, yellow mustache. And in the third place, Mr. Trimm's plump white hands were folded in his lap, held in a close and enforced companionship by a new and shiny pair of Bean's Latest Model Little Giant handcuffs. Mr. Trimm was on his way to the Federal penitentiary to serve twelve years at hard labor for breaking,

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one way or another, about all the laws that are presumed to govern national banks.

. . . . . .

All the time Mr. Trimm was in the Tombs, fighting for a new trial, a certain question had lain in his mind unasked and unanswered. Through the seven months of his stay in the jail that question had been always at the back part of his head, ticking away there like a little watch that never needed winding. A dozen times a day it would pop into his thoughts and then go away, only to come back again.

When Copley was taken to the penitentiary —Copley being the cashier who got off with a lighter sentence because the judge and jury held him to be no more than a blind accomplice in the wrecking of the Thirteenth National— Mr. Trimm read closely every line that the papers carried about Copley's departure. But none of them had seen fit to give the young cashier more than a short and colorless paragraph. For Copley was only a small figure in the big intrigue that had startled the country; Copley didn't have the money to hire big lawyers to carry his appeal to the higher courts for him; Copley's wife was keeping boarders; and as for Copley himself, he had been wearing stripes several months now.

With Mr. Trimm it had been vastly differ-

ent. From the very beginning he had held the public eye. His bearing in court when the jury came in with their judgment; his cold defiance when the judge, in pronouncing sentence, mercilessly arraigned him and the system of finance for which he stood; the manner of his life in the Tombs; his spectacular fight to beat the verdict, had all been worth columns of newspaper space. If Mr. Trimm had been a popular poisoner, or a society woman named as corespondent in a sensational divorce suit, the papers could not have been more generous in their space allotments. And Mr. Trimm in his cell had read all of it with smiling contempt, even to the semi-hysterical outpourings of the lady special writers who called him The Iron Man of Wall Street and undertook to analyze his emotions—and missed the mark by a thousand miles or two.

Things had been smoothed as much as possible for him in the Tombs, for money and the power of it will go far toward ironing out even the corrugated routine of that big jail. He had a large cell to himself in the airiest, brightest corridor. His meals were served by a caterer from outside. Although he ate them without knife or fork, he soon learned that a spoon and the fingers can accomplish a good deal when backed by a good appetite, and Mr. Trimm's appetite was uniformly good. The

warden and his underlings had been models of official kindliness; the newspapers had sent their brightest young men to interview him whenever he felt like talking, which wasn't often; and surely his lawyers had done all in his behalf that money—a great deal of money—could do. Perhaps it was because of these things that Mr. Trimm had never been able to bring himself to realize that he was the Hobart W. Trimm who had been sentenced to the Federal prison; it seemed to him, somehow, that he, personally, was merely a spectator standing at one side watching the fight of another man to dodge the penitentiary.

However, he didn't fail to give the other man the advantage of every chance that money would buy. This sense of aloofness to the whole thing had persisted even when his personal lawyer came to him one night in the early fall and told him that the court of last possible resort had denied the last possible motion. Mr. Trimm cut the lawyer short with a shake of his head as the other began saying something about the chances of a pardon from the President. Mr. Trimm wasn't in the habit of letting men deceive him with idle words. No President would pardon him, and he knew it.

"Never mind that, Walling," he said steadily, when the lawyer offered to come to see him again before he started for prison the next day.

"If you'll see that a drawing-room on the train is reserved for me—for us, I mean—and all that sort of thing, I'll not detain you any further. I have a good many things to do tonight. Good night."

"Such a man, such a man," said Walling to himself as he climbed into his car; "all chilled steel and brains. And they are going to lock that brain up for twelve years. It's a crime," said Walling, and shook his head. Walling always said it was a crime when they sent a client of his to prison. To his credit be it said, though, they sent very few of them there. Walling made as high as eighty thousand a year at criminal law. Some of it was very criminal law indeed. His specialty was picking holes in the statutes faster than the legislature could make them and provide them and putty them up with amendments. This was the first case he had lost in a good long time.

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When Jerry, the turnkey, came for him in the morning Mr. Trimm had made as careful a toilet as the limited means at his command permitted, and he had eaten a hearty breakfast and was ready to go, all but putting on his hat. Looking the picture of well-groomed, close-buttoned, iron-gray middle age, Mr. Trimm followed the turnkey through the long corridor and down the winding iron stairs to

the warden's office. He gave no heed to the curious eyes that followed him through the barred doors of many cells; his feet rang briskly on the flags.

The warden, Hallam, was there in the private office with another man, a tall, raw-boned man with a drooping, straw-colored mustache and the unmistakable look about him of the police officer. Mr. Trimm knew without being told that this was the man who would take him to prison. The stranger was standing at a desk, signing some papers.

"Sit down, please, Mr. Trimm," said the warden with a nervous cordiality. "Be through here in just one minute. This is Deputy Marshal Meyers," he added.

Mr. Trimm started to tell this Mr. Meyers he was glad to meet him, but caught himself and merely nodded. The man stared at him with neither interest nor curiosity in his dull blue eyes. The warden moved over toward the door.

"Mr. Trimm," he said, clearing his throat, "I took the liberty of calling a cab to take you gents up to the Grand Central. It's out front now. But there's a big crowd of reporters and photographers and a lot of other people waiting, and if I was you I'd slip out the back way —one of my men will open the yard gate for you—and jump aboard the subway down at

Worth Street. Then you'll miss those fellows."

"Thank you, Warden—very kind of you," said Mr. Trimm in that crisp, businesslike way of his. He had been crisp and businesslike all his life. He heard a door opening softly behind him, and when he turned to look he saw the warden slipping out, furtively, in almost an embarrassed fashion.

"Well," said Meyers, "all ready?"

"Yes," said Mr. Trimm, and he made as if to rise.

"Wait one minute," said Meyers.

He half turned his back on Mr. Trimm and fumbled at the side pocket of his ill-hanging coat. Something inside of Mr. Trimm gave the least little jump, and the question that had ticked away so busily all those months began to buzz, buzz in his ears; but it was only a handkerchief the man was getting out. Doubtless he was going to mop his face.

He didn't mop his face, though. He unrolled the handkerchief slowly, as if it contained something immensely fragile and valuable, and then, thrusting it back in his pocket, he faced Mr. Trimm. He was carrying in his hands a pair of handcuffs that hung open-jawed. The jaws had little notches in them, like teeth that could bite. The question that had ticked in Mr. Trimm's head was answered at last—in

the sight of these steel things with their notched jaws.

Mr. Trimm stood up and, with a movement as near to hesitation as he had ever been guilty of in his life, held out his hands, backs upward.

"I guess you're new at this kind of thing," said Meyers, grinning. "This here way—one at a time."

He took hold of Mr. Trimm's right hand, turned it sideways and settled one of the steel cuffs over the top of the wrist, flipping the notched jaw up from beneath and pressing it in so that it locked automatically with a brisk little click. Slipping the locked cuff back and forth on Mr. Trimm's lower arm like a man adjusting a part of machinery, and then bringing the left hand up to meet the right, he treated it the same way. Then he stepped back.

Mr. Trimm hadn't meant to protest. The word came unbidden.

"This—this isn't necessary, is it?" he asked in a voice that was husky and didn't seem to belong to him.

"Yep," said Meyers, "Standin' orders is play no favorites and take no chances. But you won't find them things uncomfortable. Lightest pair there was in the office, and I fixed 'em plenty loose."

For half a minute Mr. Trimm stood like a

rooster hypnotized by a chalkmark, his arms extended, his eyes set on his bonds. His hands had fallen perhaps four inches apart, and in the space between his wrists a little chain was stretched taut. In the mounting tumult that filled his brain there sprang before Mr. Trimm's consciousness a phrase he had heard or read somewhere, the title of a story or, perhaps, it was a headline—The Grips of the Law. The Grips of the Law were upon Mr. Trimm—he felt them now for the first time in these shiny wristlets and this bit of chain that bound his wrists and filled his whole body with a strange, sinking feeling that made him physically sick. A sudden sweat beaded out on Mr. Trimm's face, turning it slick and wet.

He had a handkerchief, a fine linen handkerchief with a hemstitched border and a monogram on it, in the upper breast pocket of his buttoned coat. He tried to reach it. His hands went up, twisting awkwardly like crab claws. The fingers of both plucked out the handkerchief. Holding it so, Mr. Trimm mopped the sweat away. The links of the handcuffs fell in upon one another and lengthened out again at each movement, filling the room with a smart little sound.

He got the handkerchief stowed away with the same clumsiness. He raised the manacled hands to his hat brim, gave it a downward

pull that brought it over his face and then, letting his short arms slide down upon his plump stomach, he faced the man who had put the fetters upon him, squaring his shoulders back. But it was hard, somehow, for him to square his shoulders—perhaps because of his hands being drawn so closely together. And his eyes would waver and fall upon his wrists. Mr. Trimm had a feeling that the skin must be stretched very tight on his jawbones and his forehead.

"Isn't there some way to hide these—these things?"

He began by blurting and ended by faltering it. His hands shuffled together, one over, then under the other.

"Here's a way," said Meyers. "This'll help."

He bestirred himself, folding one of the chained hands upon the other, tugging at the white linen cuffs and drawing the coat sleeves of his prisoner down over the bonds as far as the chain would let them come.

"There's the notion," he said. "Just do that-a-way and them bracelets won't hardly show a-tall. Ready? Let's be movin', then."

But handcuffs were never meant to be hidden. Merely a pair of steel rings clamped to one's wrists and coupled together with a scrap of chain, but they'll twist your arms and

hamper the movements of your body in a way constantly to catch the eye of the passer-by. When a man is coming toward you, you can tell that he is handcuffed before you see the cuffs.

Mr. Trimm was never able to recall afterward exactly how he got out of the Tombs. He had a confused memory of a gate that was swung open by someone whom Mr. Trimm saw only from the feet to the waist; then he and his companion were out on Lafayette Street speeding south toward the subway entrance at Worth Street, two blocks below, with the marshal's hand cupped under Mr. Trimm's right elbow and Mr. Trimm's plump legs almost trotting in their haste. For a moment it looked as if the warden's well-meant artifice would serve.

But New York reporters are up to the tricks of people who want to evade them. At the sight of them a sentry reporter on the corner shouted a warning which was instantly caught up and passed on by another picket stationed half-way down the block; and around the wall of the Tombs came pelting a flying mob of newspaper photographers and reporters, with a choice rabble behind them. Foot passengers took up the chase, not knowing what it was about, but sensing a free show. Truckmen halted their teams, jumped down from their wagon seats and joined in. A man-chase is one

of the pleasantest outdoor sports that a big city like New York can offer its people.

Fairly running now, the manacled banker and the deputy marshal shot down the winding steps into the subway a good ten yards ahead of the foremost pursuers. But there was one delay, while Meyers skirmished with his free hand in his trousers pocket for a dime for the tickets, and another before a northbound local rolled into the station. Shouted at, jeered at, shoved this way and that, panting in gulping breaths, for he was stout by nature and staled by lack of exercise, Mr. Trimm, with Meyers clutching him by the arm, was fairly shot aboard one of the cars, at the apex of a human wedge. The astonished guard sensed the situation as the scrooging, shoving, noisy wave rolled across the platform toward the doors which he had opened and, thrusting the officer and his prisoner into the narrow platform space behind him, he tried to form with his body a barrier against those who came jamming in.

It didn't do any good. He was brushed away, protesting and blustering. The excitement spread through the train, and men, and even women, left their seats, overflowing the aisles.

There is no crueler thing than a city crowd, all eyes and morbid curiosity. But Mr. Trimm didn't see the staring eyes on that ride to the

Grand Central. What he saw was many shifting feet and a hedge of legs shutting him in closely—those and the things on his wrists. What the eyes of the crowd saw was a small, stout man who, for all his bulk, seemed to have dried up inside his clothes so that they bagged on him some places and bulged others, with his head tucked on his chest, his hat over his face and his fingers straining to hold his coat sleeves down over a pair of steel bracelets.

Mr. Trimm gave mental thanks to a Deity whose existence he thought he had forgotten when the gate of the train-shed clanged behind him, shutting out the mob that had come with them all the way. Cameras had been shoved in his face like gun muzzles, reporters had scuttled alongside him, dodging under Meyers' fending arm to shout questions in his ears. He had neither spoken nor looked at them. The sweat still ran down his face, so that when finally he raised his head in the comparative quiet of the train-shed his skin was a curious gray under the jail paleness like the color of wet wood ashes.

"My lawyer promised to arrange for a compartment — for some private place on the train," he said to Meyers. "The conductor ought to know."

They were the first words he had uttered since he left the Tombs. Meyers spoke to a

jaunty Pullman conductor who stood alongside the car where they had halted.

"No such reservation," said the conductor, running through his sheaf of slips, with his eyes shifting from Mr. Trimm's face to Mr. Trimm's hands and back again, as though he couldn't decide which was the more interesting part of him; "must be some mistake. Or else it was for some other train. Too late to change now—we pull out in three minutes."

"I reckon we better git on the smoker," said Meyers, "if there's room there."

Mr. Trimm was steered back again the length of the train through a double row of pop-eyed porters and staring trainmen. At the steps where they stopped the instinct to stretch out one hand and swing himself up by the rail operated automatically and his wrists got a nasty twist. Meyers and a brakeman practically lifted him up the steps and Meyers headed him into a car that was hazy with blue tobacco smoke. He was confused in his gait, almost as if his lower limbs had been fettered, too.

The car was full of shirt-sleeved men who stood up, craning their necks and stumbling over each other in their desire to see him. These men came out into the aisle, so that Meyers had to shove through them.

"This here'll do as well as any, I guess,"

said Meyers. He drew Mr. Trimm past him into the seat nearer the window and sat down alongside him on the side next the aisle, settling himself on the stuffy plush seat and breathing deeply, like a man who had got through the hardest part of a not easy job.

"Smoke?" he asked.

Mr. Trimm shook his head without raising it.

"Them cuffs feel plenty easy?" was the deputy's next question. He lifted Mr. Trimm's hands as casually as if they had been his hands and not Mr. Trimm's, and looked at them.

"Seem to be all right," he said as he let them fall back. "Don't pinch none, I reckon?" There was no answer.

The deputy tugged a minute at his mustache, searching his arid mind. An idea came to him. He drew a newspaper from his pocket, opened it out flat and spread it over Mr. Trimm's lap so that it covered the chained wrists. Almost instantly the train was in motion, moving through the yards.

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"Be there in two hours more," volunteered Meyers. It was late afternoon. They were sliding through woodlands with occasional openings which showed meadows melting into wide, flat lands.

"Want a drink?" said the deputy, next.

"No? Well, I guess I'll have a drop myself. Travelin' fills a feller's throat full of dust." He got up, lurching to the motion of the flying train, and started forward to the water cooler behind the car door. He had gone perhaps two-thirds of the way when Mr. Trimm felt a queer, grinding sensation beneath his feet; it was exactly as though the train were trying to go forward and back at the same time. Almost slowly, it seemed to him, the forward end of the car slued out of its straight course, at the same time tilting up. There was a grinding, roaring, grating sound, and before Mr. Trimm's eyes Meyers vanished, tumbling forward out of sight as the car floor buckled under his feet. Then, as everything—the train, the earth, the sky—all fused together in a great spatter of white and black, Mr. Trimm was plucked from his seat as though a giant hand had him by the collar and shot forward through the air over the seat-backs, his chained hands aloft, clutching wildly. He rolled out of a ragged opening where the smoker had broken in two, flopped gently on the sloping side of the right-of-way and slid easily to the bottom, where he lay quiet and still on his back in a bed of weeds and wild grass, staring straight up.

How many minutes he lay there Mr. Trimm didn't know. It may have been the shrieks of the victims or the glare from the fire that

brought him out of the daze. He wriggled his body to a sitting posture, got on his feet, holding his head between his coupled hands, and gazed full-face into the crowning railroad horror of the year.

There were numbers of the passengers who had escaped serious hurt, but for the most part these persons seemed to have gone daft from terror and shock. Some were running aimlessly up and down and some, a few, were pecking feebly with improvised tools at the wreck, an indescribable jumble of ruin, from which there issued cries of mortal agony, and from which, at a point where two locomotives were lying on their sides, jammed together like fighting bucks that had died with locked horns, a tall flame already rippled and spread, sending up a pillar of black smoke that rose straight, poisoning the clear blue of the sky. Nobody paid any attention to Mr. Trimm as he stood swaying upon his feet. There wasn't a scratch on him. His clothes were hardly rumpled, his hat was still on his head. He stood a minute and then, moved by a sudden impulse, he turned round and went running straight away from the railroad at the best speed his pudgy legs could accomplish, with his arms pumping up and down in front of him and his fingers interlaced. It was a grotesque gait, rather like a rabbit hopping on its hindlegs.

Instantly, almost, the friendly woods growing down to the edge of the fill swallowed him up. He dodged and doubled back and forth among the tree trunks, his small, patent-leathered feet skipping nimbly over the irregular turf, until he stopped for lack of wind in his lungs to carry him another rod. When he had got his breath back Mr. Trimm leaned against a tree and bent his head this way and that, listening. No sound came to his ears except the sleepy calls of birds. As well as Mr. Trimm might judge he had come far into the depths of a considerable woodland. Already the shadows under the low limbs were growing thick and confused as the hurried twilight of early September came on.

Mr. Trimm sat down on a natural cushion of thick green moss between two roots of an oak. The place was clean and soft and sweet-scented. For some little time he sat there motionless, in a sort of mental haze. Then his round body slowly slid down flat upon the moss, his head lolled to one side and, the reaction having come, Mr. Trimm's limbs all relaxed and he went to sleep straightway.

After a while, when the woods were black and still, the half-grown moon came up and, sifting through a chink in the canopy of leaves above, shone down full on Mr. Trimm as he lay snoring gently with his mouth open and

his hands rising and falling on his breast. The moonlight struck upon the Little Giant handcuffs, making them look like quicksilver.

Toward daylight it turned off sharp and cool. The dogwoods which had been a solid color at nightfall now showed pink in one light and green in another, like changeable silk, as the first level rays of the sun came up over the rim of the earth and made long, golden lanes between the tree trunks. Mr. Trimm opened his eyes slowly, hardly sensing for the first moment or two how he came to be lying under a canopy of leaves, and gaped, seeking to stretch his arms. At that he remembered everything; he hunched his shoulders against the tree roots and wriggled himself up to a sitting position where he stayed for a while, letting his mind run over the sequence of events that had brought him where he was and taking inventory of the situation.

Of escape he had no thought. The hue and cry must be out for him before now; doubtless men were already searching for him. It would be better for him to walk in and surrender than to be taken in the woods like some animal escaped from a traveling menagerie. But the mere thought of enduring again what he had already gone through—the thought of being tagged by crowds and stared at, with his fetters on—filled him with a nausea. Nothing that

the Federal penitentiary might hold in store for him could equal the black, blind shamefulness of yesterday; he knew that. The thought of the new ignominy that faced him made Mr. Trimm desperate. He had a desire to burrow into the thicket yonder and hide his face and his chained hands.

But perhaps he could get the handcuffs off and so go to meet his captors in some manner of dignity. Strange that the idea hadn't occurred to him before! It seemed to Mr. Trimm that he desired to get his two hands apart more than he had ever desired anything in his whole life before.

The hands had begun naturally to adjust themselves to their enforced companionship, and it wasn't such a very hard matter, though it cost him some painful wrenches and much twisting of the fingers, for Mr. Trimm to get his coat unbuttoned and his eyeglasses in their small leather case out of his upper waistcoat pocket. With the glasses on his nose he subjected his bonds to a critical examination. Each rounded steel band ran unbroken except for the smooth, almost jointless hinge and the small lock which sat perched on the back of the wrist in a little rounded excrescence like a steel wart. In the flat center of each lock was a small keyhole and alongside of it a notched nub, the nub being sunk in a minute depression. On the

inner side, underneath, the cuffs slid into themselves—two notches on each showing where the jaws might be tightened to fit a smaller hand than his—and right over the large blue veins in the middle of the wrists were swivel links, shackle-bolted to the cuffs and connected by a flat, slightly larger middle link, giving the hands a palm-to-palm play of not more than four or five inches. The cuffs did not hurt—even after so many hours there was no actual discomfort from them and the flesh beneath them was hardly reddened.

But it didn't take Mr. Trimm long to find out that they were not to be got off. He tugged and pulled, trying with his fingers for a purchase. All he did was to chafe his skin and make his wrists throb with pain. The cuffs would go forward just so far, then the little humps of bone above the hands would catch and hold them.

Mr. Trimm was not a man to waste time in the pursuit of the obviously hopeless. Presently he stood up, shook himself and started off at a fair gait through the woods. The sun was up now and the turf was all dappled with lights and shadows, and about him much small, furtive wild life was stirring. He stepped along briskly, a strange figure for that green solitude, with his correct city garb and the glint of the steel at his sleeve ends.

Presently he heard the long-drawn, quavering, banshee wail of a locomotive. The sound came from almost behind him, in an opposite direction from where he supposed the track to be. So he turned around and went back the other way. He crossed a half-dried-up runlet and climbed a small hill, neither of which he remembered having met in his flight from the wreck, and in a little while he came out upon the railroad. To the north a little distance the rails bent round a curve. To the south, where the diminishing rails running through the unbroken woodland met in a long, shiny V, he could see a big smoke smudge against the horizon. This smoke Mr. Trimm knew must come from the wreck—which was still burning, evidently. As nearly as he could judge he had come out of cover at least two miles above it. After a moment's consideration he decided to go south toward the wreck. Soon he could distinguish small dots like ants moving in and out about the black spot, and he knew these dots must be men.

A whining, whirring sound came along the rails to him from behind. He faced about just as a handcar shot out around the curve from the north, moving with amazing rapidity under the strokes of four men at the pumps. Other men, laborers to judge by their blue overalls, were sitting on the edges of the car with their

feet dangling. For the second time within twelve hours impulse ruled Mr. Trimm, who wasn't given to impulses normally. He made a jump off the right-of-way, and as the handcar flashed by he watched its flight from the covert of a weed tangle.

But even as the handcar was passing him Mr. Trimm regretted his hastiness. He must surrender himself sooner or later; why not to these overalled laborers, since it was a thing that had to be done? He slid out of hiding and came trotting back to the tracks. Already the handcar was a hundred yards away, flitting into distance like some big, wonderfully fast bug, the figures of the men at the pumps rising and falling with a walking-beam regularity. As he stood watching them fade away and minded to try hailing them, yet still hesitating against his judgment, Mr. Trimm saw something white drop from the hands of one of the blue-clad figures on the handcar, unfold into a newspaper and come fluttering back along the tracks toward him. Just as he, starting doggedly ahead, met it, the little ground breeze that had carried it along died out and the paper dropped and flattened right in front of him. The front page was uppermost and he knew it must be of that morning's issue, for across the column tops ran the flaring headline: "Twenty Dead in Frightful Collision."

Squatting on the cindered track, Mr. Trimm patted the crumpled sheet flat with his hands. His eyes dropped from the first of the glaring captions to the second, to the next—and then his heart gave a great bound inside of him and, clutching up the newspaper to his breast he bounded off the tracks back into another thicket and huddled there with the paper spread on the earth in front of him, reading by gulps while the chain that linked wrist to wrist tinkled to the tremors running through him. What he had seen first, in staring black-face type, was his own name leading the list of known dead, and what he saw now, broken up into choppy paragraphs and done in the nervous English of a trained reporter throwing a great news story together to catch an edition, but telling a clear enough story nevertheless, was a narrative in which his name recurred again and again. The body of the United States deputy marshal, Meyers, frightfully crushed, had been taken from the wreckage of the smoker—so the double-leaded story ran—and near to Meyers another body, with features burned beyond recognition, yet still retaining certain distinguishing marks of measurement and contour, had been found and identified as that of Hobart W. Trimm, the convicted banker. The bodies of these two, with eighteen other mangled dead, had been

removed to a town called Westfield, from which town of Westfield the account of the disaster had been telegraphed to the New York paper. In another column farther along was more about Banker Trimm; facts about his soiled, selfish, greedy, successful life, his great fortune, his trial, and a statement that, in the absence of any close kin to claim his body, his lawyers had been notified.

Mr. Trimm read the account through to the end, and as he read the sense of dominant, masterful self-control came back to him in waves. He got up, taking the paper with him, and went back into the deeper woods, moving warily and watchfully. As he went his mind, trained to take hold of problems and wring the essence out of them, was busy. Of the charred, grisly thing in the improvised morgue at Westfield, wherever that might be, Mr. Trimm took no heed nor wasted any pity. All his life he had used live men to work his will, with no thought of what might come to them afterward. The living had served him, why not the dead?

He had other things to think of than this dead proxy of his. He was as good as free! There would be no hunt for him now; no alarm out, no posses combing every scrap of cover for a famous criminal turned fugitive. He had only to lie quiet a few days, somewhere, then get in secret touch with Walling. Walling

would do anything for money. And he had the money—four millions and more, cannily saved from the crash that had ruined so many others.

He would alter his personal appearance, change his name—he thought of Duvall, which was his mother's name—and with Walling's aid he would get out of the country and into some other country where a man might live like a prince on four millions or the fractional part of it. He thought of South America, of South Africa, of a private yacht swinging through the little frequented islands of the South Seas. All that the law had tried to take from him would be given back. Walling would work out the details of the escape—and make it safe and sure—trust Walling for those things. On one side was the prison, with its promise of twelve grinding years sliced out of the very heart of his life; on the other, freedom, ease, security, even power. Through Mr. Trimm's mind tumbled thoughts of concessions, enterprises, privileges—the back corners of the globe were full of possibilities for the right man. And between this prospect and Mr. Trimm there stood nothing in the way, nothing but——

Mr. Trimm's eyes fell upon his bound hands. Snug-fitting, shiny steel bands irked his wrists. The Grips of the Law were still upon him.

But only in a way of speaking. It was preposterous, unbelievable, altogether out of the

question that a man with four millions salted down and stored away, a man who all his life had been used to grappling with the big things and wrestling them down into submission, a man whose luck had come to be a byword—and had not it held good even in this last emergency?—would be balked by puny scraps of forged steel and a trumpery lock or two. Why, these cuffs were no thicker than the gold bands that Mr. Trimm had seen on the arms of overdressed women at the opera. The chain that joined them was no larger and, probably, no stronger than the chains which Mr. Trimm's chauffeur wrapped around the tires of the touring-car in winter to keep the wheels from skidding on the slush. There would be a way, surely, for Mr. Trimm to free himself from these things. There must be—that was all there was to it.

Mr. Trimm looked himself over. His clothes were not badly rumpled; his patent-leather boots were scarcely scratched. Without the handcuffs he could pass unnoticed anywhere. By night then he must be free of them and on his way to some small inland city, to stay quiet there until the guarded telegram that he would send in cipher had reached Walling. There in the woods by himself Mr. Trimm no longer felt the ignominy of his bonds; he felt only the temporary embarrassment of them and

the need of added precaution until he should have mastered them.

He was once more the unemotional man of affairs who had stood Wall Street on its esteemed head and caught the golden streams that trickled from its pockets. First making sure that he was in a well-screened covert of the woods he set about exploring all his pockets. The coat pockets were comparatively easy, now that he had got used to using two hands where one had always served, but it cost him a lot of twisting of his body and some pain to his mistreated wrist bones to bring forth the contents of his trousers pockets. The chain kinked time and again as he groped with the undermost hand for the openings; his dumpy, pudgy form writhed grotesquely. But finally he finished. The search produced four cigars somewhat crumpled and frayed; some matches in a gun-metal case, a silver cigar cutter, two five-dollar bills, a handful of silver chicken feed, the leather case of the eyeglasses, a couple of quill toothpicks, a gold watch with a dangling fob, a note-book and some papers. Mr. Trimm ranged these things in a neat row upon a log, like a watchmaker putting out his kit, and took swift inventory of them. Some he eliminated from his design, stowing them back in the pockets easiest to reach. He kept for

present employment the match safe, the cigar cutter and the watch.

This place where he had halted would suit his present purpose well, he decided. It was where an uprooted tree, fallen across an incurving bank, made a snug little recess that was closed in on three sides. Spreading the newspaper on the turf to save his knees from soiling, he knelt and set to his task. For the time he felt neither hunger nor thirst. He had found out during his earlier experiments that the nails of his little fingers, which were trimmed to a point, could invade the keyholes in the little steel warts on the backs of his wrists and touch the locks. The mechanism had even twitched a little bit under the tickle of the nail ends. So, having already smashed the gunmetal match safe under his heel, Mr. Trimm selected a slender-pointed bit from among its fragments and got to work, the left hand drawn up under the right, the fingers of the right busy with the lock of the left, the chain tightening and slackening with subdued clinking sounds at each movement.

Mr. Trimm didn't know much about picking a lock. He had got his money by a higher form of burglary that did not require a knowledge of lock-picking. Nor as a boy had he been one to play at mechanics. He had let other boys make the toy fluttermills and the wooden traps

and the like, and then he had traded for them. He was sorry now that he hadn't given more heed to the mechanical side of things when he was growing up.

He worked with a deliberate slowness, steadily. Nevertheless, it was hot work. The sun rose over the bank and shone on him through the limbs of the uprooted tree. His hat was on the ground alongside of him. The sweat ran down his face, streaking it and wilting his collar flat. The scrap of gun metal kept slipping out of his wet fingers. Down would go the chained hands to scrabble in the grass for it, and then the picking would go on again. This happened a good many times. Birds, nervous with the spirit that presages the fall migration, flew back and forth along the creek, almost grazing Mr. Trimm sometimes. A rain crow wove a brown thread in the green warp of the bushes above his head. A chattering red squirrel sat up on a tree limb to scold him. At intervals, distantly, came the cough of laboring trains, showing that the track must have been cleared. There were times when Mr. Trimm thought he felt the lock giving. These times he would work harder.

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Late in the afternoon Mr. Trimm lay back against the bank, panting. His face was

splotched with red, and the little hollows at the sides of his forehead pulsed rapidly up and down like the bellies of scared tree frogs. The bent outer case of the watch littered a bare patch on the log; its mainspring had gone the way of the fragments of the gun-metal match safe which were lying all about, each a worn-down, twisted wisp of metal. The spring of the eyeglasses had been confiscated long ago and the broken crystals powdered the earth where Mr. Trimm's toes had scraped a smooth patch. The nails of the two little fingers were worn to the quick and splintered down into the raw flesh. There were countless tiny scratches and mars on the locks of the handcuffs, and the steel wristbands were dulled with blood smears and pale-red tarnishes of new rust; but otherwise they were as stanch and strong a pair of Bean's Latest Model Little Giant handcuffs as you'd find in any hardware store anywhere.

The devilish, stupid malignity of the damned things! With an acid oath Mr. Trimm raised his hands and brought them down on the log violently. There was a double click and the bonds tightened painfully, pressing the chafed red skin white. Mr. Trimm snatched up his hands close to his near-sighted eyes and looked. One of the little notches on the under side of each cuff had disappeared. It was as if they

were living things that had turned and bitten him for the blow he gave them.

. . . . . .

From the time the sun went down there was a tingle of frost in the air. Mr. Trimm didn't sleep much. Under the squeeze of the tightened fetters his wrists throbbed steadily and racking cramps ran through his arms. His stomach felt as though it were tied into knots. The water that he drank from the branch only made his hunger sickness worse. His undergarments, that had been wet with perspiration, clung to him clammily. His middle-aged, tenderly cared-for body called through every pore for clean linen and soap and water and rest, as his empty insides called for food.

After a while he became so chilled that the demand for warmth conquered his instinct for caution. He felt about him in the darkness gathering scraps of dead wood, and, after breaking several of the matches that had been in the gun-metal match safe, he managed to strike one and with its tiny flame started a fire. He huddled almost over the fire, coughing when the smoke blew into his face and twisting and pulling at his arms in an effort to get relief from the everlasting cramps. It seemed to him that if he could only get an inch or two more of play for his hands he would be ever

so much more comfortable. But he couldn't, of course.

He dozed, finally, sitting crosslegged with his head sunk between his hunched shoulders. A pain in a new place woke him. The fire had burned almost through the thin sole of his right shoe, and as he scrambled to his feet and stamped, the clap of the hot leather flat against his blistered foot almost made him cry out.

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Soon after sunrise a boy came riding a horse down a faintly traced footpath along the creek, driving a cow with a bell on her neck ahead of him. Mr. Trimm's ears caught the sound of the clanking bell before either the cow or her herder was in sight, and he limped away, running, skulking through the thick cover. A pendent loop of a wild grapevine, swinging low, caught his hat and flipped it off his head; but Mr. Trimm, imagining pursuit, did not stop to pick it up and went on bareheaded until he had to stop from exhaustion. He saw some dark-red berries on a shrub upon which he had trod, and, stooping, he plucked some of them with his two hands and put three or four in his mouth experimentally. Warned instantly by the harsh, burning taste, he spat the crushed berries out and went on doggedly, following, according to his best judgment, a

course parallel to the railroad. It was characteristic of him, a city-raised man, that he took no heed of distances nor of the distinguishing marks of the timber.

Behind a log at the edge of a small clearing in the woods he halted some little time, watching and listening. The clearing had grown up in sumacs and weeds and small saplings and it seemed deserted; certainly it was still. Near the center of it rose the sagging roof of what had been a shack or a shed of some sort. Stooping cautiously, to keep his bare head below the tops of the sumacs, Mr. Trimm made for the ruined shanty and gained it safely. In the midst of the rotted, punky logs that had once formed the walls he began scraping with his feet. Presently he uncovered something. It was a broken-off harrow tooth, scaled like a long, red fish with the crusted rust of years.

Mr. Trimm rested the lower rims of his handcuffs on the edge of an old, broken watering trough, worked the pointed end of the rust-crusted harrow tooth into the flat middle link of the chain as far as it would go, and then with one hand on top of the other he pressed downward with all his might. The pain in his wrists made him stop this at once. The link had not sprung or given in the least, but the twisting pressure had almost broken his wrist

bones. He let the harrow tooth fall, knowing that it would never serve as a lever to free him—which, indeed, he had known all along—and sat on the side of the trough, rubbing his wrists and thinking.

He had another idea. It came into his mind as a vague suggestion that fire had certain effects upon certain metals. He kindled a fire of bits of the rotted wood, and when the flames ran together and rose slender and straight in a single red thread he thrust the chain into it, holding his hands as far apart as possible in the attitude of a player about to catch a bounced ball. But immediately the pain of that grew unendurable too, and he leaped back, jerking his hands away. He had succeeded only in blackening the steel and putting a big water blister on one of his wrists right where the shackle bolt would press upon it.

Where he huddled down in the shelter of one of the fallen walls he noticed, presently, a strand of rusted fence wire still held to half-tottering posts by a pair of blackened staples; it was part of a pen that had been used once for chickens or swine. Mr. Trimm tried the wire with his fingers. It was firm and springy. Rocking and groaning with the pain of it, he nevertheless began sliding the chain back and forth along the strand of wire.

Eventually the wire, weakened by age,

snapped in two. A tiny shined spot, hardly deep enough to be called a nick, in its tarnished, smudged surface was all the mark that the chain showed.

Staggering a little and putting his feet down unsteadily, Mr. Trimm left the clearing, heading as well as he could tell eastward, away from the railroad. After a mile or two he came to a dusty wood road winding downhill.

To the north of the clearing where Mr. Trimm had halted were a farm and a group of farm buildings. To the southward a mile or so was a cluster of dwellings set in the midst of more farm lands, with a shop or two and a small white church with a green spire in the center. Along a road that ran northward from the hamlet to the solitary farm a ten-year-old boy came, carrying a covered tin pail. A young gray squirrel flirted across the wagon ruts ahead of him and darted up a chestnut sapling. The boy put the pail down at the side of the road and began looking for a stone to throw at the squirrel.

Mr. Trimm slid out from behind a tree. A hemstitched handkerchief, grimed and stained, was loosely twisted around his wrists, partly hiding the handcuffs. He moved along with a queer, sidling gait, keeping as much of his body as he could turned from the youngster. The ears of the little chap caught the faint

scuffle of feet and he spun around on his bare heel.

"My boy, would you——" Mr. Trimm began.

The boy's round eyes widened at the apparition that was sidling toward him in so strange a fashion, and then, taking fright, he dodged past Mr. Trimm and ran back the way he had come, as fast as his slim brown legs could take him. In half a minute he was out of sight round a bend.

Had the boy looked back he would have seen a still more curious spectacle than the one that had frightened him. He would have seen a man worth four million dollars down on his knees in the yellow dust, pawing with chained hands at the tight-fitting lid of the tin pail, and then, when he had got the lid off, drinking the fresh, warm milk which the pail held with great, choking gulps, uttering little mewing, animal sounds as he drank, while the white, creamy milk ran over his chin and splashed down his breast in little, spurting streams.

But the boy didn't look back. He ran all the way home and told his mother he had seen a wild man on the road to the village; and later, when his father came in from the fields, he was soundly thrashed for letting the sight of a tramp make him lose a good tin bucket

and half a gallon of milk worth nine cents a quart.

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The rich, fresh milk put life into Mr. Trimm. He rested the better for it during the early part of that night in a haw thicket. Only the sharp, darting pains in his wrists kept rousing him to temporary wakefulness. In one of those intervals of waking the plan that had been sketchily forming in his mind from the time he had quit the clearing in the woods took on a definite, fixed shape. But how was he with safety to get the sort of aid he needed, and where?

Canvassing tentative plans in his head, he dozed off again.

. . . . . .

On a smooth patch of turf behind the blacksmith shop three yokels were languidly pitching horseshoes—"quaits," they called them—at a stake driven in the earth. Just beyond, the woods shredded out into a long, yellow and green peninsula which stretched up almost to the back door of the smithy, so that late of afternoons the slanting shadows of the nearmost trees fell on its roof of warped shingles. At the extreme end of this point of woods Mr. Trimm was squatted behind a big boulder,

squinting warily through a thick-fringed curtain of ripened goldenrod tops and sumacs, heavy-headed with their dark-red tapers. He had been there more than an hour, cautiously waiting his chance to hail the blacksmith, whose figure he could make out in the smoky interior of his shop, passing back and forth in front of a smudgy forge fire and rattling metal against metal in intermittent fits of professional activity.

From where Mr. Trimm watched to where the horseshoe-pitching game went on was not more than sixty feet. He could hear what the players said and even see the little puffs of dust rise when one of them clapped his hands together after a pitch. He judged by the signs of slackening interest that they would be stopping soon and, he hoped, going clear away.

But the smith loafed out of his shop and, after an exchange of bucolic banter with the three of them, he took a hand in their game himself. He wore no coat or waistcoat and, as he poised a horseshoe for his first cast at the stake, Mr. Trimm saw, pinned flat against the broad strap of his suspenders, a shiny, silvery-looking disc. Having pitched the shoe, the smith moved over into the shade, so that he almost touched the clump of undergrowth that half buried Mr. Trimm's protecting boulder. The near-sighted eyes of the fugitive banker

could make out then what the flat, silvery disc was, and Mr. Trimm cowered low in his covert behind the rock, holding his hands down between his knees, fearful that a gleam from his burnished wristlets might strike through the screen of weed growth and catch the inquiring eye of the smith. So he stayed, not daring to move, until a dinner horn sounded somewhere in the cluster of cottages beyond, and the smith, closing the doors of his shop, went away with the three yokels.

Then Mr. Trimm, stooping low, stole back into the deep woods again. In his extremity he was ready to risk making a bid for the hire of a blacksmith's aid to rid himself of his bonds, but not a blacksmith who wore a deputy sheriff's badge pinned to his suspenders.

. . . . . .

He caught himself scraping his wrists up and down again against the rough, scrofulous trunk of a shellbark hickory. The irritation was comforting to the swollen skin. The cuffs, which kept catching on the bark and snagging small fragments of it loose, seemed to Mr. Trimm to have been a part and parcel of him for a long time—almost as long a time as he could remember. But the hands which they clasped so close seemed like the hands of somebody else. There was a numbness about them

that made them feel as though they were a stranger's hands which never had belonged to him. As he looked at them with a sort of vague curiosity they seemed to swell and grow, these two strange hands, while the fetters measured yards across, while the steel bands shrunk to the thinness of piano wire, cutting deeper and deeper into the flesh. Then the hands in turn began to shrink down and the cuffs to grow up into great, thick things as cumbersome as the couplings of a freight car. A voice that Mr. Trimm dimly recognized as his own was saying something about four million dollars over and over again.

Mr. Trimm roused up and shook his head angrily to clear it. He rubbed his eyes free of the clouding delusion. It wouldn't do for him to be getting light-headed.

. . . . . .

On a flat, shelving bluff, forty feet above a cut through which the railroad ran at a point about five miles north of where the collision had occurred, a tramp was busy, just before sundown, cooking something in an old wash-boiler that perched precariously on a fire of wood coals. This tramp was tall and spindle-legged, with reddish hair and a pale, beardless, freckled face with no chin to it and not much forehead, so that it ran out to a peak like the

profile of some featherless, unpleasant sort of fowl. The skirts of an old, ragged overcoat dangled grotesquely about his spare shanks.

Desperate as his plight had become, Mr. Trimm felt the old sick shame at the prospect of exposing himself to this knavish-looking vagabond whose help he meant to buy with a bribe. It was the sight of a dainty wisp of smoke from the wood fire curling upward through the cloudy, damp air that had brought him limping cautiously across the right-of-way, to climb the rocky shelf along the cut; but now he hesitated, shielded in the shadows twenty yards away. It was a whiff of something savory in the washboiler, borne to him on the still air and almost making him cry out with eagerness, that drew him forth finally. At the sound of the halting footsteps the tramp stopped stirring the mess in the washboiler and glanced up apprehensively. As he took in the figure of the newcomer his eyes narrowed and his pasty, nasty face spread in a grin of comprehension.

"Well, well, well," he said, leering offensively, "welcome to our city, little stranger."

Mr. Trimm came nearer, dragging his feet, for they were almost out of the wrecks of his patent-leather shoes. His gaze shifted from the tramp's face to the stuff on the fire, his nostrils wrinkling. Then slowly, "I'm in trouble," he said, and held out his hands.

"Wot I'd call a mild way o' puttin' it," said the tramp coolly. "That purticular kind o' joolry ain't gen'lly wore for pleasure."

His eyes took on a nervous squint and roved past Mr. Trimm's stooped figure down the slope of the hillock.

"Say, pal, how fur ahead are you of yore keeper?" he demanded, his manner changing.

"There is no one after me—no one that I know of," explained Mr. Trimm. "I am quite alone—I am certain of it."

"Sure there ain't nobody lookin' fur you?" the other persisted suspiciously.

"I tell you I am all alone," protested Mr. Trimm. "I want your help in getting these—these things off and sending a message to a friend. You'll be well paid, very well paid. I can pay you more money than you ever had in your life, probably, for your help. I can promise——"

He broke off, for the tramp, as if reassured by his words, had stooped again to his cooking and was stirring the bubbling contents of the washboiler with a peeled stick. The smell of the stew, rising strongly, filled Mr. Trimm with such a sharp and an aching hunger that he could not speak for a moment. He mastered himself, but the effort left him shaking and gulping.

"Go on, then, an' tell us somethin' about

yourself," said the freckled man. "Wot brings you roamin' round this here railroad cut with them bracelets on?"

"I was in the wreck," obeyed Mr. Trimm. "The man with me—the officer—was killed. I wasn't hurt and I got away into these woods. But they think I'm dead too—my name was among the list of dead."

The other's peaky face lengthened in astonishment.

"Why, say!" he began. "I read all about that there wreck—seen the list myself—say, you can't be Trimm, the New York banker? Yes, you are! Wot a streak of luck! Lemme look at you! Trimm, the swell financier, sportin' 'round with the darbies on him all nice an' snug an' reg'lar! Mister Trimm—well, if this ain't rich!"

"My name is Trimm," said the starving banker miserably. "I've been wandering about here a great many hours—several days, I think it must be—and I need rest and food very much indeed. I don't—don't feel very well," he added, his voice trailing off.

At this his self-control gave way again and he began to quake violently as if with an ague. The smell of the cooking overcame him.

"You don't look so well an' that's a fact, Trimm," sneered the tramp, resuming his malicious, mocking air. "But set down an'

make yourself at home, an' after a while, when this is done, we'll have a bite together—you an' me. It'll be a reg'lar tea party fur jest us two."

He broke off to chuckle. His mirth made him appear even more repulsive than before.

"But looky here, you wuz sayin' somethin' about money," he said suddenly. "Le's take a look at all this here money."

He came over to him and went through Mr. Trimm's pockets. Mr. Trimm said nothing and stood quietly, making no resistance. The tramp finished a workmanlike search of the banker's pockets. He looked at the result as it lay in his grimy palm—a moist little wad of bills and some chicken-feed change—and spat disgustedly with a nasty oath.

"Well, Trimm," he said, "fur a Wall Street guy seems to me you travel purty light. About how much did you think you'd get done fur all this pile of wealth?"

"You will be well paid," said Mr. Trimm, arguing hard; "my friend will see to that. What I want you to do is to take the money you have there in your hand and buy a cold chisel or a file—any tools that will cut these things off me. And then you will send a telegram to a certain gentleman in New York. And let me stay with you until we get an answer—until he comes here. He will pay you well; I promise it."

He halted, his eyes and his mind again on the bubbling stuff in the rusted washboiler. The freckled vagrant studied him through his red-lidded eyes, kicking some loose embers back into the fire with his toe.

"I've heard a lot about you one way an' another, Trimm," he said. " 'Tain't as if you wuz some pore down-an'-out devil tryin' to beat the cops out of doin' his bit in stir. You're the way-up, high-an'-mighty kind of crook. An' from wot I've read an' heard about you, you never toted fair with nobody yet. There wuz that young feller, wot's his name?—the cashier—him that wuz tried with you. He went along with you in yore games an' done yore work fur you an' you let him go over the road to the same place you're tryin' to dodge now. Besides," he added cunningly, "you come here talkin' mighty big about money, yet I notice you ain't carryin' much of it in yore clothes. All I've had to go by is yore word. An' yore word ain't worth much, by all accounts."

"I tell you, man, that you'll profit richly," burst out Mr. Trimm, the words falling over each other in his new panic. "You must help me; I've endured too much—I've gone through too much to give up now." He pleaded fast, his hands shaking in a quiver of fear and eagerness as he stretched them out in entreaty and his linked chain shaking with

them. Promises, pledges, commands, orders, arguments poured from him. His tormentor checked him with a gesture.

"You're wot I'd call a bird in the hand," he chuckled, hugging his slack frame, "an' it ain't fur you to be givin' orders—it's fur me. An', anyway, I guess we ain't a-goin' to be able to make a trade—leastwise not on yore terms. But we'll do business all right, all right—anyhow, I will."

"What do you mean?" panted Mr. Trimm, full of terror. "You'll help me?"

"I mean this," said the tramp slowly. He put his hands under his loose-hanging overcoat and began to fumble at a leather strap about his waist. "If I turn you over to the Government I know wot you'll be worth, purty near, by guessin' at the reward; an' besides, it'll maybe help to square me up fur one or two little matters. If I turn you loose I ain't got nothin' only your word—an' I've got an idea how much faith I kin put in that."

Mr. Trimm glanced about him wildly. There was no escape. He was fast in a trap which he himself had sprung. The thought of being led to jail, all foul of body and fettered as he was, by this filthy, smirking wretch made him crazy. He stumbled backward with some insane idea of running away.

"No hurry, no hurry a-tall," gloated the

tramp, enjoying the torture of this helpless captive who had walked into his hands. "I ain't goin' to hurt you none—only make sure that you don't wander off an' hurt yourself while I'm gone. Won't do to let you be damagin' yoreself; you're valuable property. Trimm, now, I'll tell you wot we'll do! We'll just back you up agin one of these trees an' then we'll jest slip this here belt through yore elbows an' buckle it around behind at the back; an' I kinder guess you'll stay right there till I go down yonder to that town that I passed comin' up here an' see wot kind of a bargain I kin strike up with the marshal. Come on, now," he threatened with a show of bluster, reading the resolution that was mounting in Mr. Trimm's face. "Come on peaceable, if you don't want to git hurt."

Of a sudden Mr. Trimm became the primitive man. He was filled with those elemental emotions that make a man see in spatters of crimson. Gathering strength from passion out of an exhausted frame, he sprang forward at the tramp. He struck at him with his head, his shoulders, his knees, his manacled wrists, all at once. Not really hurt by the puny assault, but caught by surprise, the freckled man staggered back, clawing at the air, tripped on the wash-boiler in the fire, and with a yell vanished below the smooth edge of the cut.

Mr. Trimm stole forward and looked over the bluff. Half-way down the cliff on an outcropping shelf of rock the man lay, face downward, motionless. He seemed to have grown smaller and to have shrunk into his clothes. One long, thin leg was bent up under the skirts of the overcoat in a queer, twisted way, and the cloth of the trouser leg looked flattened and empty. As Mr. Trimm peered down at him he saw a red stain spreading on the rock under the still, silent figure's head.

Mr. Trimm turned to the washboiler. It lay on its side, empty, the last of its recent contents sputtering out into the half-drowned fire. He stared at this ruin a minute. Then without another look over the cliff edge he stumbled slowly down the hill, muttering to himself as he went. Just as he struck the level it began to rain, gently at first, then hard, and despite the shelter of the full-leaved forest trees, he was soon wet through to his skin and dripped water as he lurched along without sense of direction and, indeed, without any active realization of what he was doing.

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Late that night it was still raining—a cold, steady, autumnal downpour. A huddled figure slowly climbed upon a low fence running about the house-yard of the little farm where the boy

lived who got thrashed for losing a milkpail. On the wet top rail, precariously perching, the figure slipped and sprawled forward in the miry yard. It got up, painfully swaying on its feet. It was Mr. Trimm, looking for food. He moved slowly toward the house, tottering from weakness and because of the slick mud underfoot; peering near-sightedly this way and that through the murk; starting at every sound and stopping often to listen.

The outlines of the lean-to kitchen at the back of the house were looming dead ahead of him when from the corner of the cottage sprang a small terrier. It made for Mr. Trimm, barking shrilly. He retreated backward, kicking at the little dog and, to hold his balance, striking out with short, dabby jerks of his fettered hands—they were such motions as the terrier itself might make trying to walk on its hindlegs. Still backing away, expecting every instant to feel the terrier's teeth in his flesh, Mr. Trimm put one foot into a hotbed with a great clatter of the breaking glass. He felt the sharp ends of shattered glass tearing and cutting his shin as he jerked free. Recovering himself, he dealt the terrier a lucky kick under the throat that sent it back, yowling, to where it had come from, and then, as a door jerked open and a half-dressed man jumped out into the darkness, Mr. Trimm half hob-

bled, half fell out of sight behind the woodpile.

Back and forth along the lower edge of his yard the farmer hunted, with the whimpering, cowed terrier to guide him, poking in dark corners with the muzzle of his shotgun for the unseen intruder whose coming had aroused the household. In a brushpile just over the fence to the east Mr. Trimm lay on his face upon the wet earth, with the rain beating down on him, sobbing with choking gulps that wrenched him cruelly, biting at the bonds on his wrists until the sound of breaking teeth gritted in the air. Finally, in the hopeless, helpless frenzy of his agony he beat his arms up and down until the bracelets struck squarely on a flat stone and the force of the blow sent the cuffs home to the last notch so that they pressed harder and faster than ever upon the tortured wrist bones.

When he had wasted ten or fifteen minutes in a vain search the farmer went shivering back indoors to dry out his wet shirt. But the groveling figure in the brushpile lay for a long time where it was, only stirring a little while the rain dripped steadily down on everything.

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The wreck was on a Tuesday evening. Early on the Saturday morning following, the chief of police, who was likewise the whole of the day police force in the town of Westfield, nine

miles from the place where the collision occurred, heard a peculiar, strangely weak knocking at the front door of his cottage, where he also had his office. The door was a Dutch door, sawed through the middle, so that the top half might be opened independently, leaving the lower panel fast. He swung this top half back.

A face was framed in the opening—an indescribably dirty, unutterably weary face, with matted white hair and a rime of whitish beard stubble on the jaws. It was fallen in and sunken and it drooped on the chest of its owner. The mouth, swollen and pulpy, as if from repeated hard blows, hung agape, and between the purplish parted lips showed the stumps of broken teeth. The eyes blinked weakly at the chief from under lids as colorless as the eyelids of a corpse. The bare white head was filthy with plastered mud and twigs, and dripping wet.

"Hello, there!" said the chief, startled at this apparition. "What do you want?"

With a movement that told of straining effort the lolled head came up off the chest. The thin, corded neck stiffened back, rising from a dirty, collarless neckband. The Adam's apple bulged out prominently, as big as a pigeon's egg.

"I have come," said the specter in a wheez-

ing rasp of a voice which the chief could hardly hear, "I have come to surrender myself. I am Hobart W. Trimm."

"I guess you got another think comin'," said the chief, who was by the way of being a neighborhood wag. "When last seen Hobart W. Trimm was only fifty-two years old. Besides which, he's dead and buried. I guess maybe you'd better think ag'in, grandpap, and see if you ain't Methus'lah or the Wanderin' Jew."

"I am Hobart W. Trimm, the banker," whispered the stranger with a sort of wan stubbornness.

"Go on and prove it," suggested the chief, more than willing to prolong the enjoyment of the sensation. It wasn't often in Westfield that wandering lunatics came a-calling.

"Got any way to prove it?" he repeated as the visitor stared at him.

"Yes," came the creaking, rusted hinge of a voice, "I have."

Slowly, with struggling attempts, he raised his hands into the chief's sight. They were horribly swollen hands, red with the dried blood where they were not black with the dried dirt; the fingers puffed up out of shape; the nails broken; they were like the skinned paws of a bear. And at the wrists, almost buried in the bloated folds of flesh, blackened, rusted, bat-

tered, yet still strong and whole, was a tightly locked pair of Bean's Latest Model Little Giant handcuffs.

"Great God!" cried the chief, transfixed at the sight. He drew the bolt and jerked open the lower half of the door.

"Come in," he said, "and lemme get them irons off of you—they must hurt something terrible." "They can wait," said Mr. Trimm very humbly. "I have worn them a long, long while, I think—I am used to them. Wouldn't you please get me some food first?"

PETER B. KYNE

FOREWORD

IN the days of my youth I was happy. I had no money, hence no responsibilities. All I had was a job with wages that never developed into a position with salary. However, out of my stipend I managed to buy a good shotgun and, each fall thereafter, a case of shells with my own special load for quail—one ounce of No. 9 chilled shot with twenty-four grains of Laflin & Rand powder. In "those old days of the lost sunshine" I possessed also two additional treasures—the most wonderful and lovable shooting crony a man ever had and the finest little English setter any man ever killed a quail over. My pal presented me with this dog because he loved me; moreover, he had a weakness for pointers and owned a bitch named Lou.

Lee Clark and his good dog Lou! What memories they evoke! As I write the years fall away and Lee and Lou and Dick and I are quail-hunting in the hills of California. I see a little swale covered with stunted sage, blackberry bushes and dried nettles, and the dogs are questing through it. Lee Clark is on one side of this swale and I am on the other, and for a moment the dogs are invisible to me. Then, borne to me on the crisp October air, comes Lee's voice:

"Point!"

I move fifteen or twenty feet. I am in no hurry, for I know those dogs. It is a matter of personal honor with

them not to break point. Presently I see them. Little lemon-and-white Lou has found the bird, and Dick, thorough little gentleman that he was, is honoring her point! Lee walks down to his dog; the quail lies close. "Good old Lou," Lee says, and stoops to give her the caress she craves. Then he kicks out the bird—for me! (Lee was like that. He would never kill a bird over his own dog's point while his field companion stood by, nor could any protest move him from this exhibition of his inherent graciousness and courtesy.) So I fire—and miss—and then at forty yards Lee gets the bird, and Lou trots sedately down and picks the little feathered martyr up very gently, scarcely disturbing a feather, and carries the trophy uphill to Lee. As I write, with twenty years behind me, I can see her yet, her tail and rear end swishing pridefully and her beautiful eyes abeam with love; she is even trying to smile with the bird in her mouth!

Lee takes the bird from her and tucks it in his hunting-coat pocket. Then he strokes Lou's head and says: "Good girl," and Lou licks his hand and scurries away to find another bird. And this time she points so close to me that Lee calls cheerily to me to kick the bird out and kill it. I do—and again Lou retrieves the bird. But she does not bring it to her master this time. Ah, no! Lou is wiser than that. She brings it to me, for she knows it is my bird!

Meanwhile Dick is frozen on another bird! And so it goes. At noon we rest under an oak beside a creek, and over a barbecued steak and a bottle of good wine, discuss the morning shoot and the prospects of as good shooting in the afternoon. And late that night we drive

home in the moonlight in an old side-bar buggy, with Dick curled up in back and Lou in her master's lap, with her muzzle in his hand . . .

Well, there will never be another Dick or another Lou or another gallant, kindly, unselfish, understanding friend and shooting crony like Lee Clark. A fiend stole Dick from me and Lou died in puppy-birth; when Lee told me about it he wept, and I honored him for his tears. And then the pressure of life commenced to be felt. After twelve years of Lou, Lee Clark could not accustom himself to other dogs—and the hopelessness of finding another Lou was quite apparent, for Lou had been one of those rare dogs that do not require training! And I could never find another Dick, and had no place to keep him if I had. I became an author and married, and a multitude of interests claimed us, and we gave up quail-shooting, although every few years we meet and talk bravely about the necessity for renewing our youth afield.

A man who has trained field dogs for me has much of Lee Clark in him, and that man's wife is a rare good sport. One day I went to his kennels, and he showed me a five-year-old setter that had been the unbeautiful runt of his litter. He called this dog Jeff, and Jeff was a failure. His litter mates had made field trial history but Jeff was so little and homely, nobody had ever wanted him, and he had never been trained. He was a stud dog.

He was the reincarnation of my lost Dick! I bought him for a hundred and twenty-five dollars, and ignoring the theory that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks, I had Jeff trained. He was such a bright, cunning, fast little old man of a dog that the trainer, who names my dogs

after the heroes and heroines of my stories, renamed him Cappy Ricks and registered him by that name. Cappy Ricks did not win in the field trials that year, but he lost on a hair-line decision and after an exhibition of bird work that made him great, even in defeat, and brought me offers of far more than I had spent on him from men who knew a real dog when they saw one. Well, I have bought many dogs, but I have never sold one, and I never shall . . . too much like selling old Uncle Tom down the river! So Cappy is rounding out his years questing through the alfalfa field at my ranch for quail that aren't there. However, I gave him his chance, for dead Dick's sake, and he made good, and I hope he enjoyed it.

So I wrote a story about Cappy and a fictitious trainer and his wife, because field dog trainers and the field dog "fancy" are different from all other sportsmen. And when my little story had been written and my editor, Ray Long, asked me what I was going to call it, I had a swift and poignant vision of a lovely October morning in the hills of California. There was a little swale grown over with stunted sage, blackberry vines and dried nettles, and in the cover Lou was standing at point, with Dick honoring her; from across the swale I heard again the voice of the best friend and the best field companion any man ever had. And he was calling warningly:

"Point!"

Yes, this story is dedicated to Lee Clark and his good dog, Lou!

POINT

By Peter B. Kyne

LITTLE Old Dan Pelly occupied a position in life analogous to that of a tragedian who aspires to play comedy rôles. By reason of early environment, natural inclination and years of practice, he was a dog trainer; now, in the sunset of his rather futile life, he was a cross between a chicken raiser, farmer and dreamer of old dreams that had to do mostly with dogs and good quail cover. In a word, old Dan was not happy, and this morning as he sat on a fallen scrub oak tree on the highest point on his alleged ranch and gazed off into Little Antelope Valley, he almost wished that a merciful Providence would waft him out of this cold world.

"The Indians had the right idea of a hereafter," mused Dan Pelly. "To them the next world was a happy hunting ground. This world is no longer fit for a white man to live in. It's getting too civilized. Travel as far as you will

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for good trout-fishing and upland hunting and you'll find some scrub there ahead of you in a flivver. Get out on your own ground at dawn on the day the shooting season opens—and you'll find empty shotgun shells a week old. Tim, old pal, the more I see of some men the more I love you."

Tim—or, to accord him his registered name, Tiny Tim—ran his cool muzzle into Dan Pelly's horny palm and rested it there. Just rested it and spoke never a word, for Tiny Tim was one of those rare dogs who know when their masters are troubled of soul and forbear to weary their loved ones with unnecessary outbursts of affection or sympathy. He leaned his shoulder against Dan's knee and rested his muzzle in Dan's hand as who should say: "Well, man alone is vile. Here I am and I'll stick, depend upon it."

Tiny Tim was an English setter and the last surviving son of Keepsake, the greatest bitch Dan Pelly had ever seen or owned. Dan had wept when an envious scoundrel had poisoned her the night before a field trial up Bakersfield way. All of her puppies out of Kenwood Boy had survived, and all had made history in dogdom. Three of them had been placed—one, two, three—in the Derby. The other two had been the runners-up, and the least promising of these runners-up had been Tiny Tim.

Tim had been the runt of the litter and as if his physical deficiency had not been sufficient handicap, he had grown into a singularly unbeautiful dog. He had a butterfly nose, one black ear, a solid white coat with the exception of a black spot as big as a man's hand just over the root of his tail; and his tail was his crowning misfortune. Dog fanciers like a setter with a merry tail, but Tiny Tim carried his very low when he ran that Derby, and he had never carried it very high since. As if to offset the tragedy of his tail, however, Tiny Tim ran with a high head, for he had, tucked away in that butterfly nose, a pair of olfactory nerves that carried him unerringly to birdy ground. He could always manage to locate a bird lying close in cover that had been thoroughly prospected by other dogs.

Dan Pelly had sold Tiny Tim's litter mates at a fancy figure after that memorable Derby, but for homely Tiny Tim there were no bidders; so Dan Pelly expressed him back to the kennels. He was homely and lacked style and dash in his bird work; he appeared a bit nervous and uncertain and inclined to limit his range, and it seemed to Dan that as a field trial prospect he was so much inferior to other dogs that it was scarcely worth while spending any time or money on his education. However, he did have a grand nose; when he grew older

Dan hoped he might outgrow his nervousness and be steadier to shot and wing; in view of his undoubted instinct for birds, it seemed the part of wisdom to make a "plug" shooting dog of him. Every dog trainer keeps such an animal, if not for his own use then for the use of stout old bank presidents and of retired brewers whose idea of the sport of hunting is to come home with "the limit." A grand hunting dog means little in the lives of such "sportsmen"; they want a dog that will work close to the gun, thus enabling them to proceed leisurely, as becomes a fat man. It is no pleasure to them to be forced to walk down a steep hill, clamber across a deep gully and climb the opposite hill to kill a bird their dog has been pointing for fifteen or twenty minutes. It is reserved for idealists like old Dan Pelly to thrill to the work of a dog like that. The dead bird is a secondary consideration.

So Tiny Tim had been sent back to the kennel, and now, in his fifth year, he was still on Dan Pelly's hands. But that was no fault of Tiny Tim's. And he had never again been entered in a field trial. That was no fault of his, either. Dan Pelly had merely gone out of the dog business, and Tiny Tim, his last dog and best beloved, was neither a field trial dog nor yet a potterer for fat bankers and retired brewers who came down to Dan Pelly's place

for a week-end shoot in the season. No, Tiny Tim had never achieved that disgrace. Dan Pelly had given up dog training and dog boarding and dog raising and dog trading after his return from that field trial where old Keepsake's litter had brought him more money than he had ever seen at any one time before. Consequently, Tiny Tim was Dan's own shooting dog and Dan had trained him not for filthy lucre but for that love and companionship for a good dog which idealists of the Dan Pelly type can never repress.

Tiny Tim had known but one master, and but one code of sportsmanship; he responded to but one set of signals; he had never been curbed in his range or speed; he had never been scolded or shouted at or beaten, but he *had* received much of love and caressing and praise. He had been fed properly, housed properly, wormed regularly every three months, bathed every Saturday afternoon and brushed and combed almost every day, and as a result he was an extremely healthy dog, albeit a small dog, even among small, field type English setters. Dan Pelly loved him just a little bit more because he was a runt and because, though royally bred, his bearing was a bit ignoble.

"I'll have none of your bench type setters," Dan was wont to remark when speaking of setters. "I could weep from just lookin' at them

—the poor boobs, with their domed foreheads and their sad, bloodshot eyes and dribbling chops. Too heavy and slow for anybody but a fat man. An hour's hard going of a warm day and they're done. I'll have a light, neat little setter for a long, hard, drivin' day of it."

Dan Pelly's choice of dog was an index to his character. He, too, was a light, compact little man, with something of a lost dog's wistfulness about him. Dan didn't like pointers. They were too aggressive, too headstrong, too noisy for him. The sight of a bulldog or a bull terrier or an Airedale made him angry, for such dogs could always be depended upon to pounce upon a shooting dog and worry him. Toy dogs depressed him. They seemed so unworthy of human attention and moreover they had no brains.

This morning Dan Pelly was more than ordinarily unhappy. He needed five hundred dollars worse than he needed salvation . . .

And only the day before while he and Tim had been working a patch of low cover just off the county road, a man in a very expensive automobile driven by a liveried chauffeur had paused in the road to watch them. Presently Tim had made one of those spectacular points which always give a real dog lover a thrill. In mid-air, while leaping over a small bush, he had caught the scent of a quail crouching close

under that bush. He had landed with his body half turned toward the bush, his head had swung around and there he had stood, "frozen." Dan had walked up, kicked the bird out, waited until the quail was forty yards away and fired. Meanwhile Tim had broken point and, head up, was following the flushed bird with anxious eyes.

As the gun barked the bird flinched slightly but did not reduce its speed. Wings spread stiffly, it sailed away out of sight and Dan Pelly, seeing himself watched by the man in the motor car, grinned deprecatingly.

"Missed him a mile," he called.

"You let him get too far away before you fired," the stranger replied with that hearty camaraderie which always obtains between lovers of upland shooting.

"My gun is a full choke; I can kill nicely with it at fifty yards, but I like to give the birds a chance for their white alley so I never shoot under forty yards."

"Grand point your little setter made then. Steady to flush and shot, too. Homely little rascal, but man, he's a dog! I must have a look at him, if you don't mind, my friend." And he got out of the car.

"Certainly, sir. Come, Timmy, lad. Shake hands with the gentleman."

But Tiny Tim had other and more important

matters to attend to. He was racing at full speed after that departing bird. Dan whistled him to halt, but Tim paid no attention. He crossed a gentle rise of ground and disappeared on the other side. He was out of sight for about five minutes; then he appeared again on the crest and came jogging sedately back to Dan Pelly. In his mouth he held tenderly a wounded quail. Straight to Dan Pelly he came, and as he advanced he twisted his little body sinuously and arched and lowered his shoulders and flipped his tail from side to side and smiled with his eyes. In effect he said:

"Dan, you didn't think you hit that bird, but I saw him flinch ever so little. I've had a lot of experience in such matters and experience has taught me that a bird hit like that will fly a couple of hundred yards and then drop. So I kept my eye on this one and sure enough just as he reached the top of that little rise I saw him settle rather abruptly. So I went over and nosed around and picked up his trail. He had an injured wing—numbed, probably—and he was down and running to beat the band. It's sporty to chase a runner, because if we don't get him, Dan, a weasel will."

The stranger looked at the bird in Tim's mouth and then he looked at Dan Pelly. "Well, I'll be swindled!" he declared. "If I live to be a million years old I'll never see a

prettier piece of bird work than that. The dog's human."

"Yes, he's a right nice little feller," Dan declared pridefully. "Timmy, boy, take the bird to the gentleman and then shake hands with him."

Timmy looked at the stranger, who smiled at him, so he walked sedately to the latter and gently dropped the frightened bird into his hand. Not a feather had been disturbed; not a tooth had marred the tender flesh.

The stranger reached down and twigged Tiny Tim's nose; then he tugged his ear a little, said "Good dog" and stroked Tim's head. Tim extended a paw to be shaken. They were friends.

"Want to sell this dog, my friend?" the newcomer demanded.

"Oh, no! Timmy's the only dog I have left. He's just my little shooting dog and I'm right fond of him. He has a disposition that sweet, sir, you've never seen the beat of it. If I sold Timmy I'd never dare come home. My wife would take the rolling pin to me."

"I'll give you two hundred and fifty dollars for him."

"Timmy isn't for sale, sir."

"Not enough money, eh? Well, I don't blame you. If Timmy was my dog five thousand dollars wouldn't touch him. It was worth

that to me to see him perform. Let me see him work this cover, if you please." To Tiny Tim: "All right, boy. Root 'em out. Lots of birds in here yet."

The dog was off like a streak. Suddenly he paused, sniffing up-wind, swung slowly left and slowly right, trotted forward a few paces and halted, head up, tail swinging excitedly, every muscle aquiver.

"It's dry as tinder and the birds don't lay close. He's on to some running birds now, sir. Watch him road 'em to heavier cover and then point."

Instead, they flushed. Tim watched them interestedly, marked where they had settled, moved gingerly forward—and froze on a single that had failed to flush. Dan Pelly handed the stranger his gun. "Perhaps, sir," he said with his wistful smile, "you might enjoy killing a bird over Timmy's point."

This was the apotheosis of field courtesy. The stranger took the gun, smiling his thanks, walked over to Tiny Tim, kicked out the bird and missed him. Tim glanced once at the bird and promptly dismissed him from consideration. He made a wide cast to come up on the spot where he had seen the flushed covey settle.

"Point!" called Dan Pelly. This time the stranger killed his bird, which Tim retrieved in handsome style.

"He brought the dead bird to me!" the stranger shouted. "Did you notice that? He brought it to me!"

"Of course. It's your bird. You killed it. Timmy knows that. It wouldn't be mannerly of him to bring it to me. I see you appreciate a good shooting dog, sir. I suppose, living in the city and a busy man, you don't get much afield. There's a lot of birds scattered in this cover. Have a little shoot over Timmy. I have four birds and that's enough for our supper. I'll sit down under this oak tree and have a smoke."

"That's devilish sporting of you, my friend. Thank you very much." And the stranger hurried away after Tiny Tim. He was an incongruous figure in that patch of cover, what with his derby hat and overcoat, and he seemed to realize this, for he shed both, stuffed a dozen cartridges into his pockets—he was far too big a man to wear Dan Pelly's disreputable old hunting jacket—and hurried away after Tiny Tim. From the far corner of the field Dan presently heard a merry fusillade, and in about fifteen minutes his guest returned with half a dozen quail and Tiny Tim trotting at his heels.

"I'll give you a thousand dollars for Timmy, my friend," was his first announcement. "Why, he works for me as if I were his master."

"You're the first man except his master who has ever shot over him," Pelly replied proudly. "Sorry, but Timmy is not for sale."

"I'll bet nobody has ever offered you a thousand dollars for him. Here's my card, Mr.—er—er——"

"Dan Pelly's my name, sir."

"Mr. Pelly, and if you change your mind, wire me collect and I'll send a man down with the cash and you can send the dog back by him."

Dan took the card. The stranger thanked him and departed with his quail in his expensive car.

And this morning Dan Pelly sat at the highest point on his so-called ranch and looked down into Little Antelope Valley and was unhappy. He needed five hundred dollars to meet a mortgage; he could get a thousand dollars within twenty-four hours by sending a telegram collect to the man who had admired Tiny Tim —and he didn't have the courage to send the telegram. In fact, he hadn't had sufficient courage to tell Martha, his wife, of the stranger's offer. Martha was made of sterner stuff than her husband and a terrible panic of fear had seized Dan at the mere thought of telling her. What if she should accept the thousand dollars?

Dan loaded his pipe and smoked rumina-

tively. He thought of his wasted and futile life. Twenty-five years wasted as a professional dog trainer. Faugh! And all he had to show for it was a host of memories, sweet and bitter; sweet as he remembered the dear days afield with good dogs and good fellows, the thrill of many a hard-fought field trial; bitter as he thought of dogs he had loved and which had been sold or poisoned or died of old age or disease; bitterer still as he reflected that he and Martha had come to a childless old age with naught between them and the county poor farm save a thousand acres of rough sage-covered land which, with the exception of about twenty-five acres of rich, sub-irrigated bottom land, was worthless save as a training ground for dogs. It had numerous springs on it, good cover and just enough scrub oaks to form safe roosting places for quail. It was a rather decent little game preserve and occasionally Dan made a few dollars by granting old customers the privilege of a shoot on it. He ran about a hundred head of goats on it, while in the bottom land he and Martha eked out a precarious existence with a few chickens and turkeys, a few hogs, a few stands of bees, three cows, a couple of horses and Tiny Tim. For Tim was known to a few dog fanciers as the last of the old Keepsake-Kenwood Boy strain in the state and

not infrequently they sent their bitches to Tiny Tim's court.

Poor Martha! Hers had not been a very happy life with Dan Pelly. A dog trainer is—a dog trainer. He can't very well be anything else because God has made him so. And in his heart of hearts he doesn't want to be. He trains dogs ostensibly for money but in reality because he loves them and the job affords him a legitimate excuse to be afield with them, to enjoy their society and that of the jovial devotees of upland game-shooting. Dan Pelly wasn't an ambitious man. He had no desire to clip coupons or wear fine raiment; his taste in automobiles went no further than an old ruin he had picked up for two hundred dollars for the purpose of carting his dogs around in the days before Martha took over the handling of the Pelly fortunes, when Dan had had dogs to cart around.

The crux of the situation was this. Dog trainers are so busy with their dogs that they neglect to send out bills for board and training, and the men who can afford to buy expensive dogs and have them boarded and trained seldom think of their dogs until fall. Then they pay the bill and sometimes wonder why it is so large. In a word, the income of a dog trainer is never what one might term staggering, and it is more or less uncertain.

Martha had grown weary of this uncertainty and when distemper for the second time had cleaned out Dan Pelly's kennels, taking all of his own dogs with the exception of Tiny Tim and either killing or ruining the dogs of his customers, Mrs. Pelly felt that it was time to act. She knew it would be years before Dan's old customers would send dogs to him again. Friendship and a reputation as a great trainer are undoubtedly first aids to a dog trainer's success, but men who love their dogs hesitate to send them to a kennel where the germs of virulent distemper are known to exist. It was up to Dan Pelly to burn his old kennels and build new ones far removed from the location of the old. He could not afford to do this and since Martha was desirous of seeing him engage in something more constructive, Dan Pelly had gone out of business and become a farmer in the trifling manner heretofore described.

Martha told him she was weary of dogs. She had shed too many tears over dead favorites; she had assisted at too many operations for the cure of canker of the ear, fistula, tumor and cancer, broken legs, smashed toes and cuts from barbed wire. She was already too learned in the gentle art of healing mange and exorcising tapeworms. She loved dogs, but to have thirty pointers and setters set up a furious

barking whenever a stranger appeared at the Pelly farm had finally "gotten on her nerves." She understood Dan better than he understood himself and she knew how bitter was the sacrifice she demanded; yet she realized that she must be firm and lead Daniel in the way he must go, else would they come to want and misery in a day when Dan would be too old to tramp over hill and dale training dogs. Dan had readily consented to her direction—particularly after she had wept a little. Poor Martha!

From where he sat Dan Pelly could this morning see great activity on the floor of Little Antelope Valley, just below him. Half a dozen men on horseback were riding backward and forward and at least a dozen white specks that Dan Pelly knew for hunting dogs were ranging here and there among the low sage cover.

"The first arrivals for the Pacific Coast Field Trials, and they're out on the grounds, looking them over and seeing how their dogs behave. Three days from now they'll be running the Derby, and after that the All Age Stake. Ah, Timmy lad, if we two could only go to a field trial again! How like old times it would be, Timmy! We'd be down at the station to greet all the gentlemen coming in for the trials, and then we'd be crowding around the baggage car watching the dogs in their crates

bein' lifted out. And we'd be peekin' through the air-holes in the crates to see whether they'd be setters or pointers, and if setters, whether they'd be English or Irish. And then the banquet up at the hotel the night before the Derby and the toastmaster rappin' for order and sayin': 'Gentlemen, we have with us tonight one of the Old Guard, Dan Pelly. Dan is going to tell us something about the field trials of other days—other days and other dogs. Gentlemen—old Dan Pelly.'

"Ah, Tim my lad, we're out of it. Think, Timmy, if we two were driving out to Antelope Valley in the morning, with you in my lap, and the entrance fee up and me wild with excitement, if you were paired say with a dog like Manitoba Rap or Fischel's Frank or Mary Montrose or Ringing Bells or Robert the Devil—any one of the big ones, eh, Timmy? No, Timmy, I wouldn't be excited. They're all great dogs. Didn't Mary Montrose win the All America three times—the only dog in the world that ever proved her championship caliber three times?

"But Timmy lad, you'd run circles around her. You might run with a low head and a dead tail—though your head is high and your tail is none so low as it was in the Derby, when you were a wee puppy and nervous and frightened—but you'd make the judges notice you,

Timmy. You'd show them dash and range and speed and style and brains; steady to flush, steady to shot, steady to command, no false pointing, no roading birds to a flush if you could help it, picking up singles on ground the other dog thought he had covered, marking where the flushed coveys settle and picking them up again. Ah, Timmy dog, it's breaking my heart to hide your light under a bushel basket. I owe it to you to let men that know and can appreciate a good dog see you work. Of the hundreds of dogs I've owned, of the thousand I've trained since boyhood, you are the king of them all. God help me, Timmy, I gave Martha my word I'd never attend another field trial or handle another dog in one, either for myself or another. We're whipped, Timmy. Whipped to a frazzle."

Tiny Tim leaned a little closer and licked the palm of Dan's hand. He was an understanding little dog. Even when Dan finally heaved slowly to his feet and started down the hillside toward home, Tiny Tim followed at his heels, forbearing to follow his natural instinct, which was to frisk ahead of Dan far and wide and attend to the business for which he really had been created.

Arrived at the house Dan encountered with a sheepish glance the searching one of his wife.

"Where have you been, Dan?" she queried.

"Oh, takin' a little walk," he replied.

She sat down beside him on the porch and put her arm around his neck. "Hard to be out of it, isn't it, dear?"

"It's hard to think that a dog like Timmy shouldn't have his chance, Martha. Why not make an exception to our agreement in this one case? I'm sure I could win the All Age Stake with him. The entrance fee is twenty-five dollars and there'll be upwards of forty dogs entered. That'll be a thousand-dollar purse, divided five hundred, three-fifty and a hundred and fifty. Might win first prize and be able to pay the mortgage. Somehow I got a notion the bank won't renew the loan."

Martha's eyes were as wistful as her husband's but hers was a far more resolute nature. She kept her bargains and expected others to keep theirs; she knew the weakness of Dan Pelly. If he should go down to the field trials and enter Tiny Tim, he would meet old friends and old customers. It was four years since he had quit the game—long enough for men to forget those distemper germs and take another chance on Dan, for Dan's fame as a trainer was almost national. Somebody would be certain to ask him to train a Derby or Futurity prospect for next fall, or to handle a string of dogs in the Manitoba chicken trials.

And Dan was weak. He was one of those

men who could never quite say no as if he meant it. Let him go down to dogdom and he would be back in the game again as deep as ever within a year. Decidedly (thought Martha) they couldn't afford to go over that ground again.

"Yes," Dan sighed, "it's a pity Timmy can't have his chance. He never was a kennel-raised dog. He's been allowed to rove and roam and he's hunted so much on his own I don't really understand why he hasn't been spoiled. But the exercise and experience he's had in one year exceed that of most dogs in a lifetime. He's little, but he's well muscled and tough and can hold his speed long after other dogs have slowed up. I wish he could have his chance, Martha."

Martha felt herself slipping, so, to avoid that catastrophe, she left Dan and entered the house.

All day long Dan sat on the porch, glooming and grieving. Having the field trials held practically at his own door was a sore temptation. Dan dwelt in Gethsemane. All day he suffered until finally, being human, he was tempted beyond his strength and fell. About four o'clock, while Martha was busy feeding the chickens, locking them up and gathering eggs, Dan Pelly sneaked into the house, donned his Sunday suit, abstracted the sum of fifty dollars from Mar-

tha's cache in the tomato can back of the jars of preserves on the back porch, cranked his prehistoric automobile and with Tiny Tim on the seat behind him fled to the fleshpots. He left a note on the dining-room table for Martha.

Dear Martha:
Can't stand it any longer. Timmy *must* have his chance. It's for his sake, dear. I've robbed you of your egg money, but I *know* you'll have it back tomorrow. Your loving
DAN.

Dan Pelly felt like a criminal as he rattled down the dusty country lane. But if he could only have seen Martha's face as she read his note! She laughed at first and then her eyes grew moist. "Poor old Dan!" she murmured to the cat. "I'm so glad he defied me. It proves he's a human being. I'm so grateful to him for his weakness. He didn't force me to a decision."

Arrived in town Dan Pelly parked his car at the village square, went to the local hotel and engaged a room. He registered, "Dan Pelly and his dog, Tiny Tim." Before he could go up to the room he was seen and recognized by the secretary of the field trial club, Major Christensen.

"Hello, Dan, you old fossil. When did they

dig you up?" the Major saluted him affably. "Back in the game again?"

"Oh, no," Dan replied. "Just blew in to look 'em over. Got a son of old Keepsake and Kenwood Boy here. Thought I'd start him in fast company and see if he has any class. He's just a plug shooting dog."

"Well," the Major answered, looking Tim over with a critical and disapproving glance, "it'll cost you twenty-five dollars to glean that information, Dan." He took out an entry blank; Dan filled it out and returned it together with the entrance fee. Next he visited the hotel kitchen, where he did business with the chef and procured for Tiny Tim a hearty ration of lamb stew with vegetables, after which he took the little dog up to his room. Tim sprang into bed immediately, curled up and went to sleep.

That night Dan attended the banquet. Old friends were there, fellow trainers, trainers he had never met before, with dogs from Canada to the Gulf, from Maine to California. It was an exceedingly doggy party and poor old starved Dan reveled in it. He was living again, and under the stimulus of the unusual excitement and a couple of nips of contraband Scotch whisky he made the speech of his career, ripped the Fish and Game Commission up the back and ended by going upstairs and bringing Tiny Tim down in his arms to exhibit him to those

around the festal board as the only real dog he had ever owned.

"He'll win every heat in which he's entered," Dan bragged, "and he'll win in the finals. He looks like a mutt, but oh, boy, watch his smoke!"

When the drawing for the next day's events took place, Dan discovered that Tiny Tim had been paired with a famous old pointer from Nevada, known as Colonel Dorsey. Dan knew there were better dogs than Colonel Dorsey, but they weren't very plentiful, and under the able handling of a veteran trainer, Alf Wilkes, Dan knew Tiny Tim would have to extend himself to center the attention of the judges on his performance. To have Tim paired with Colonel Dorsey pleased Dan greatly, however, for if Tim merely succeeded in running a dead heat with the Colonel, that meant that Tim and the Colonel would fight it out together in the finals; for Colonel Dorsey was, in the opinion of all present, the class of the entries; he was in excellent form and condition and as full of ginger and go as a runaway horse.

A gentleman who had arrived too late for the banquet came shouldering his way through the crowd in the hotel lobby just after the drawing. Dan recognized in him the gentleman who had offered him a thousand dollars for Tiny Tim that day in the patch of cover by

the side of the road. He came smiling up to Dan Pelly and shook his hand heartily.

"I'm the owner of Colonel Dorsey," he announced. "It'll be a barrel of fun to run my dog against Tiny Tim. A sporting dog owned and handled by a sportsman. Mr. Pelly, we're going to have a race."

"I hope so, sir," said Dan simply. "I want Timmy to have a foeman worthy of his steel, as the feller says."

"He will," the other promised.

He did. They were put down in a wide flat with a little watercourse running through the center of it. The cover was low, stunted sage, affording excellent cover for the birds and opportunities for them to sneak away from a dog without being seen, for there was not much open space between the sage bushes. They were away together, headed for the watercourse, Colonel Dorsey in the lead.

Suddenly Tiny Tim stopped dead and commenced to road at right angles, coming up into the wind. The Colonel pressed eagerly on and flushed, but was steady to flush. So was Tiny Tim. A moment later the Colonel pointed and Tiny Tim, standing in the open, honored the Colonel's point beautifully, but broke point after a minute of waiting and scouted off on a wide cast. The Colonel held his point and his handler, coming up, attempted to flush. The

point was barren. Undoubtedly the bird had been there but had run out.

The Colonel's owner, who had been following the judges in a buckboard with Dan Pelly in the seat beside him, looked at his guest. "I own a colonel, but you own a general, Mr. Pelly. Your dog is handling his birds better than mine."

"Point!" came a hoarse shout from the direction in which Tim had gone. He had come back on his cast and was down in the watercourse on point. Dan Pelly got out of the buckboard and flushed a double, at the same time firing over the birds. Tim was absolutely stanch to shot and flush. He looked disappointed because no dead bird rewarded his efforts, but immediately pressed on up the gully. Dan Pelly thrilled. He knew the birds would lie close in this cover and that Tim would run up a heavy score. He did. Point after point he scored and always a single was flushed. When he had made nineteen points on single birds the whistle blew and the dogs were taken up.

Colonel Dorsey, ranging wide, had shown speed, style and dash but had found no birds. Tim had made but one cast but it was sufficient to show that he, too, had speed and range, albeit his style was nothing to brag about. But he had performed the function for which bird

dogs are bred. He had found game and handled it in a masterly manner. The dogs were down forty minutes and both were fresh when taken up. The judges awarded the heat to Tiny Tim.

Colonel Dorsey's owner slapped old Dan Pelly on the back. "I came a long way for a splendid thrashing," he admitted gallantly. "However, the Colonel was out of luck. He got off into barren territory and rather wasted his time. We'll meet again in the finals."

And it was even so. Three days later Tiny Tim again faced the Colonel, who in the succeeding heats had given marvelous performances and disposed of his antagonists in a most decisive manner. But likewise so had Tiny Tim.

It was a battle from start to finish. Both dogs got on birdy ground at once and worked it thoroughly, and at the finish there was little to choose between them. Tim had two more points to his credit and no flushes; the Colonel had one flush, due to eagerness at the start, and he had failed to honor one of Tim's points. These errors appeared to offset Tim's lack of style, but the latter's marvelous bird work could not be gainsaid; and remembering the decisive manner in which the little setter had disposed of the Colonel in the initial heat, the judges awarded the All Age Stake, which car-

ried with it the Pacific Coast championship, to Tiny Tim and Dan Pelly retired to the hotel richer by five hundred dollars and a silver loving cup. That afternoon he paid two hundred and fifty dollars on the mortgage and had it renewed for another year. Then he wrote a letter to Martha, bought a neat crate for Tiny Tim and—started down the field trial circuit.

In some ways—notably dog ways—Dan Pelly was a weak vessel. He lacked the moral courage to come home and be good forever after. Timmy was so much better in big company than he had anticipated that should it mean death to both of them, Dan Pelly simply had to try him out in Oregon on pheasant. Poor Timmy had never seen a pheasant, and it was such a shame to deny him this great adventure.

So the next Martha heard of Dan was a wire to the effect that Timmy had taken second place in the trials on pheasant at Lebanon, Oregon. A week later came another telegram, informing her that Timmy had taken first money in the Washington field trials, handling Hungarian partridge for the first time. A letter followed and Martha read:

Dear Wife:

I don't suppose you will ever believe me again now that I have broke my word to you and run

away. I don't seem to be able to help myself. Timmy is wonderful. I've got to go on to try him on chicken in Manitoba and then the International and the All America. I enclose $500.

With love from Timmy and
Your devoted husband,
DAN PELLY.

Timmy was third on prairie chicken. Everybody said his performance was marvelous in view of his total ignorance of this splendid game, so Dan Pelly did not think it worth while to advertise the fact that he had introduced Timmy to two crippled chickens the day before in order that he might know their scent when he ran on to it. The International in Montana was won by Timmy, and Dan's cup of happiness overflowed when the judges handed him his trophies and a check for a thousand dollars. Colonel Dorsey gave him a stiff run but the best the Colonel could do was second place.

And then came the never to be forgotten day down in Kentucky when Timmy went in on bobwhite quail for the All America, the field trial classic of the Western Hemisphere. Timmy was at home again on quail. He had some bad luck before he learned about bobwhite's peculiarities, but he had enough wins to put him in the finals, and at the finish he was cast off with a little Llewellyn bitch whose performance made Dan Pelly's heart skip a beat or two. Nothing except Timmy's age and

years of experience enabled him to win over her; up to the last moments of the race predictions were freely made that it would be a dead heat.

But just before the whistle blew, Timmy roaded a small cover to a stanch point—the sole find made during the heat—and Dan Pelly went home with Timmy and more money than he had ever seen before in his life except in a bank; although better to wistful little Dan was the knowledge that he had bred, raised, trained and handled the most consistent winner and the most spectacularly outstanding bird dog champion in North America. Old Keepsake and her wonderful consort, Kenwood Boy, had transmitted their great qualities to their son, and Dan knew, in view of Tiny Tim's great record over the field trial circuit, how much in demand would be the puppies from that strain. Please God, Timmy might live long enough to perpetuate his great qualities in his offspring.

Dan's return was not a triumphal one. He felt like anything except a conquering hero. Indeed, he felt mean and low and untrustworthy; he had to call on a reserve store of courage in order to face Martha and explain his dastardly conduct in appropriating her fifty dollars, breaking his promise and running away with Timmy.

Martha was sitting on the porch in her rock-

ing-chair as Dan and his dog came up the lane. Tiny Tim romped ahead and sprang up in Martha's lap and kissed her and whimpered his joy at the homecoming—so Martha had ample opportunity to brace herself to meet the culprit.

"Hello, Martha, old girl," Dan cried with a cheerfulness he was far from feeling. "Timmy and I are home again. Are you going to forgive me, Martha?"

Martha looked so glum and serious that Dan's heart sank.

"Oh, Martha!" he quavered and came slowly up the steps and tossed into her lap a huge roll of banknotes. "I know I done wrong, Martha," he declaimed. "I've been gamblin' on the side—you know, honey—side bets on Timmy. I'm afraid we're never going to be real poor again. We've got the mortgage paid off and three thousand in reserve, and I'm going to sell Timmy for seven thousand five hundred dollars, with a half interest in his sire fees for three years——"

Martha stood up, her eyes ablaze with scorn and anger.

"Dan Pelly," she flared at him, "how dare you?"

Dan hung his head.

"Oh, Martha," he pleaded, "can't you real-

ize how terrible it is to keep a good dog down?"

"Who offered to buy Timmy?"

"Mr. Fletcher, the owner of Colonel Dorsey."

"Tell him to go chase himself," Martha suggested slangily. "If you expect to make your peace with me, Dan Pelly, you'll give up all idea of selling Timmy."

"But Martha—seven thousand five hundred dollars! Think what it means to you. No more worry about our old age, everything settled fine and dandy at last after twenty-five years of hard luck."

"Do you really want to sell Timmy, Dan?"

"No, Martha, I don't. It'd break my heart. Bu-bu-but—I'll do it for your sake."

"Dan, come here."

Dan came and flopped awkwardly on his old knees while Martha's arms went around him.

"Sweet old Dan," she whispered. "What a glorious holiday you two have had! I've been so happy just realizing how happy you have been. Dan!"

"Yes, Martha."

"Perhaps we can get back into the dog business again. Don't you think you'd like to buy about half a dozen really fine brood bitches? Timmy's puppies would be spoken for before they were born. The least we could get would

be a hundred dollars each for them." She stroked his old head. "I'm afraid, Dan, it's too late to reform you. Once a dog man, always a dog man——"

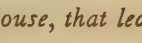
What else she intended to say remained forever unsaid, for little, weak, foolish, sentimental old Dan commenced to sniffle, as he had the night old Keepsake was poisoned. He wasn't a worldly man or a very ambitious man; he craved but little here below, but one of the things he craved was clean sportsmanship and love and understanding and a small, neat, field type English setter that would be just a little bit better than the other fellow's. And tonight he was so filled with happiness he just naturally overflowed. Tiny Tim, observing that something was wrong, came and leaned his shoulder against Martha's knee and laid his muzzle in her hand and rested it there. It was a big moment!

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

FOREWORD

THERE must be some sentiment attached to an author's choice of what he considers his "best story," if he can reach any such decision at all. Frankly, I cannot, and so I have chosen the story which has always lived closest to my heart. It is really not a short story complete in itself, but is one of ten stories, or instalments, which make up my novel "Kazan."

This individual story I like best because in it I bid good-by to Kazan and Gray Wolf, two dogs whose memories will live with me long after the memories of many of my two-legged friends have faded away. Kazan died up near Fort MacPherson, a little this side of the Arctic Circle; Gray Wolf near Norway House. Gray Wolf was a dog with an undoubted strain of wolf in her, and was blinded when very young. She did not belong to me, but was owned by a man who claimed to be a relative of the Bishop of the Yukon. Kazan was mine. He was a one-man dog. It was his friendship for blind Gray Wolf, when we were on one of our adventures near Norway House, that led to the writing of my novel "Kazan."



KAZAN

By James Oliver Curwood

KAZAN, the quarter-strain wolf dog, lay at the end of a fine steel chain, watching little Professor McGill mixing a pail of tallow and bran. A dozen yards from him lay a big Dane, his huge jaws drooling in anticipation of the unusual feast which McGill was preparing. The Dane showed signs of pleasure when McGill approached him with a quart of the mixture, and as he gulped it down the little man with the cold blue eyes and the gray-blond hair stroked his back without fear. But his attitude was different when he turned to Kazan. His movements were filled with caution, and yet his eyes and his lips were smiling, and he gave the wolf-dog no evidence of his fear, if it could be called fear.

The little professor was up in the north country for the Smithsonian Institution and had spent a third of his life among dogs. He loved them, and understood them. He had written a

From James Oliver Curwood's Kazan. Copyright 1914, by Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. By permission of the publishers

number of magazine articles on dog intellect which had attracted wide attention among naturalists. It was largely because he loved dogs, and understood them more than most men, that he had bought Kazan and the big Dane on a night when Sandy McTrigger and his partner had tried to get them to fight to the death in a Red Gold City saloon. The refusal of the two splendid beasts to kill each other for the pleasure of the three hundred men who had assembled to witness the fight delighted the professor. He had already planned a paper on the incident.

Sandy had told McGill the story of Kazan's capture, and of his wild mate, Gray Wolf, and the professor had asked him a thousand questions. But each day Kazan puzzled him more. No amount of kindness on his part could bring a responsive gleam in Kazan's eyes. Not once did Kazan signify a willingness to become friends. And yet he did not snarl at McGill, or snap at his hands when they came within reach. Quite frequently Sandy McTrigger came over to the little cabin where McGill was staying, and three times Kazan leaped at the end of his chain to get at him, and the wolf-dog's white fangs gleamed as long as Sandy was in sight. Alone with McGill he became quiet.

Something told Kazan that McGill had come as a friend that night when he and the big Dane

stood shoulder to shoulder in the cage that had been built for a slaughter pen. Away down in his brute heart he held McGill apart from other men. He had no desire to harm him. He tolerated him, but showed none of the growing affection of the huge Dane. It was this fact that puzzled McGill. He had never before known a dog that he could not make love him.

Today he placed the tallow and bran before Kazan, and the smile in his face gave way to a look of perplexity. Kazan's lips had drawn suddenly back. A fierce snarl rolled deep in his throat. The hair along his spine stood up. His muscles twitched. Instinctively the professor turned. Sandy McTrigger had come up quietly behind him. His brutal face wore a grin as he looked at Kazan.

"It's a fool job—tryin' to make friends with *him*," he said. Then he added, with a sudden interested gleam in his eyes, "When you startin'?"

"With the first frost," replied McGill. "It ought to come soon. I'm going to join Sergeant Conroy and his party at Fond du Lac by the first of October."

"And you're going up to Fond du Lac—alone?" queried Sandy. "Why don't you take a man?"

The little professor laughed softly.

"Why?" he asked. "I've been through the

Athabasca waterways a dozen times, and know the trail as well as I know Broadway. Besides, I like to be alone. And the work isn't too hard, with the currents all flowing to the north and east."

Sandy was looking at the Dane, with his back to McGill. An exultant gleam shot for an instant into his eyes.

"You're taking the dogs?"

"Yes."

Sandy lighted his pipe, and spoke like one strangely curious.

"Must cost a heap to take these trips o' yourn, don't it?"

"My last cost about seven thousand dollars. This will cost five," said McGill.

"Gawd!" breathed Sandy. "An' you carry all that along with you! Ain't you afraid—something might happen——"

The little professor was looking the other way now. The carelessness in his face and manner changed. His blue eyes grew a shade darker. A hard smile which Sandy did not see hovered about his lips for an instant. Then he turned, laughing.

"I'm a very light sleeper," he said. "A footstep at night rouses me. Even a man's breathing awakens me, when I make up my mind that I must be on guard. And, besides," —he drew from his pocket a blue-steel auto-

matic pistol,—"I know how to use *this*." He pointed to a knot in the wall of the cabin. "Observe," he said. Five times he fired, at twenty paces, and when Sandy went up to look at the knot he gave a gasp. There was one jagged hole where the knot had been.

"Pretty good," he grinned; "most men couldn't do better'n that with a rifle."

When Sandy left, McGill followed him with a suspicious gleam in his eyes, and a curious smile on his lips. Then he turned to Kazan.

"Guess you've got him figgered out about right, old man," he laughed softly. "I don't blame you very much for wanting to get him by the throat. Perhaps——"

He shoved his hands deep in his pockets, and went into the cabin. Kazan dropped his head between his paws, and lay still, with wide-open eyes. It was early in September, and each night brought now the first chill breaths of autumn. Kazan watched the last glow of the sun as it faded out of the southern skies. Darkness always followed swiftly after that, and with darkness came more fiercely his wild longing for freedom. For Kazan was remembering.

Ever since that terrible day when the brute prospector, Sandy McTrigger, had first beaten him sick and then chained him in the wake of his canoe till every splendid muscle in his bruised body seemed bursting with pain and he

was choked with water, Kazan had never for one minute ceased to remember and hate and mourn. He hated Sandy McTrigger with all the hatred of a dog and a wolf, and he mourned for his blind mate, Gray Wolf, with as much intensity as he hated. But with all the longing and sorrow in him he could not know how much more awful their separation was for his faithful mate.

Never had the terror and loneliness of blindness fallen upon Gray Wolf as in the days that followed Kazan's capture. For hours after the shot, she had crouched in the bush back from the river, waiting for him to come to her. She had faith that he would come, as he had come a thousand times before, and she lay close on her belly, sniffing the air, and whining when it brought no scent of her mate. Day and night were alike an endless chaos of darkness to her now, but she knew when the sun went down. She sensed the first deepening shadows of evening, and she knew that the stars were out, and that the river lay in moonlight. It was a night to roam, and after a time she had moved restlessly about in a small circle on the plain, and sent out her first inquiring call for Kazan.

Up from the river came the pungent odor of smoke, and instinctively she knew that it was this smoke, and the nearness of men, that was keeping Kazan from her. But she went no

nearer than that first circle made by her padded feet. Blindness had taught her to wait. Since the day of the battle on the Sun Rock, when the lynx had destroyed her eyes, Kazan had never failed her. Three times she called for him in the early night. Then she made herself a nest under a Banksian shrub, and waited until dawn.

Just as she knew when night blotted out the last glow of the sun, so without seeing she knew when day came. Not until she felt the warmth of the sun on her back did her anxiety overcome her caution. Slowly she moved toward the river, sniffing the air, and whining. There was no longer the smell of smoke in the air, and she could not catch the scent of man. She followed her own trail back to the sand bar, and in the fringe of thick bush overhanging the white shore of the stream she stopped and listened.

After a little she scrambled down and went straight to the spot where she and Kazan were drinking when Sandy's shot came. And there her nose struck the sand still wet and thick with Kazan's blood. She sniffed the trail of his body to the edge of the stream, where Sandy had dragged him to the canoe. And then she came upon one of the two clubs that Sandy had used to beat wounded Kazan into submission. It was covered with blood and hair, and all at

once Gray Wolf lay back on her haunches and turned her blind face to the sky, and there rose from her throat a cry for Kazan that drifted for miles on the wings of the south wind. Never had Gray Wolf given quite that cry before. It was not the "call" that comes with moonlit nights, and neither was it the hunt cry, nor the she-wolf's yearning for matehood. It carried with it the lament of death. And after that one cry Gray Wolf slunk back to the fringe of bush over the river, and lay with her face turned to the stream.

A strange terror fell upon her. She had grown accustomed to darkness, but never before had she been *alone* in that darkness. Always there had been the guardianship of Kazan's presence. She heard the clucking sound of a spruce hen in the bush a few yards away, and now that sound came to her as if from out of another world. A ground-mouse rustled through the grass close to her fore-paws, and she snapped at it—and closed her teeth on a rock. The muscles of her shoulders twitched tremulously, and she shivered as if stricken by intense cold. She was terrified by the darkness that shut out the world from her, and she pawed at her closed eyes, as if she might open them to light.

Early in the afternoon she wandered back

on the plain. It was different. It frightened her, and soon she returned to the beach, and snuggled down under the tree where Kazan had lain. She was not so frightened here. The smell of Kazan was strong about her. For an hour she lay motionless, with her head resting on the club clotted with his hair and blood. Night found her still there. And when the moon and stars came out she crawled back into the pit in the white sand that Kazan's body had made under the tree.

With dawn she went down to the edge of the stream to drink. She could not see that the day was almost as dark as night, and that the gray-black sky was a chaos of slumbering storm. But she could smell the presence of it in the thick air, and could *feel* the forked flashes of lightning that rolled up with the dense pall from the south and west. The distant rumbling of thunder grew louder, and she huddled herself again under the tree. For hours the storm crashed over her, and the rain fell in a deluge. When it had finished, she slunk out from her shelter, like a thing beaten. Vainly she sought for one last scent of Kazan. The club was washed clean. Again the sand was white where Kazan's blood had reddened it. Even under the tree there was no sign of him left.

Until now only the terror of being alone in

the pit of darkness that enveloped her had oppressed Gray Wolf. With afternoon came hunger. It was this hunger that drew her from the sandbar, and she wandered back into the plain. A dozen times she scented game, and each time it evaded her. Even a ground-mouse that she cornered under a root escaped her fangs.

That night she slept again where Kazan had lain, and three times she called for him without answer. But still through the day that followed, and the day that followed that, blind Gray Wolf clung to the narrow rim of white sand. On the fourth day her hunger reached a point where she gnawed the bark from willow bushes. It was on this day that she made a discovery. She was drinking, when her sensitive nose touched something in the water's edge that was smooth, and bore a faint fleshy odor. It was one of the big northern river clams. She pawed it ashore, sniffing at the hard shell. Then she crunched it between her teeth. She had never tasted sweeter meat than that which she found inside, and she began hunting for other clams. She found many of them, and ate until she was no longer hungry.

For three days more Gray Wolf remained on the bar. And then, one night the Call came to her. It set her quivering with a strange, new excitement—something that may have been

a new hope—and in the moonlight she trotted nervously up and down the shining strip of sand, facing now the north, and now the south, and then the east and the west—her head flung up, listening, as if in the soft wind of the night she was trying to locate the whispering lure of a wonderful voice. And whatever it was that came to her, came from out of the south and east. Off there—across the barren, far beyond the outer edge of the northern timber line—was *home*. And off there, in her brute way, she reasoned that she must find Kazan.

The Call did not come from their old windfall home in the swamp. It came from beyond that, and in a flashing vision there rose through her blindness a picture of the towering Sun Rock, of the winding trail that led to it, and the cabin on the plain where the man and the woman and the baby lived. It was there that blindness had come to her. It was there that day had ended, and eternal night had begun. And it was there that she had given birth to her first-born. Nature had registered these things so that they could never be wiped out of her memory.

And to that Call she responded, leaving the river and its food behind her—straight out into the face of darkness and starvation, no longer

fearing death or the emptiness of the world she could not see; for ahead of her, two hundred miles away, she could see the Sun Rock, the winding trail, the nest of her first-born between the two big rocks—*and Kazan!*

And sixty miles farther north Kazan, night after night, gnawed at his steel chain. Night after night he had watched the stars, and the moon, and had listened for Gray Wolf's call, while the big Dane lay sleeping. Tonight it was colder than usual, and the keen tang of the wind that came fresh from the west stirred him strangely. It set his blood afire with what the Indians call the Frost Hunger. Lethargic summer was gone and the sharp-winded days and nights of hunting were at hand. He wanted to leap out into freedom and run until he was exhausted, with Gray Wolf at his side. He knew that Gray Wolf was off there—where the stars hung low in the clear sky—and that she was waiting.

All that night he was restless—more restless than he had been at any time before. Once, in the far distance, he heard a cry that he thought was the cry of Gray Wolf, and his answer roused McGill from deep sleep. It was dawn, and the little professor dressed himself and came out of the cabin. With satisfaction he noted the exhilarating snap in the air. He wet his fingers and held them above his head,

chuckling when he found the wind had swung into the north. He went to Kazan, and talked to him. Among other things he said: "This'll put the black flies to sleep, Kazan. A day or two more of it and we'll start."

Five days later McGill led first the Dane, and then Kazan, to a packed canoe. Sandy McTrigger saw them off, and Kazan watched for a chance to leap at him. Sandy kept his distance, and McGill watched the two with a thought that set the blood running swiftly behind the mask of his careless smile. They had slipped a mile downstream when he leaned over and laid a fearless hand on Kazan's head. Something in the touch of that hand, and in the professor's voice, kept Kazan from a desire to snap at him. He tolerated the friendship with expressionless eyes and a motionless body.

"I was beginning to fear I wouldn't have much sleep, old boy," chuckled McGill ambiguously, "but I guess I can take a nap now and then with *you* along!"

For three days the journey continued without mishap along the shore of Lake Athabasca. On the fourth night McGill pitched his tent in a clump of Banksian pine a hundred yards back from the water. All that day the wind had come steadily from behind them, and for at least a half of the day the professor had been watching Kazan closely. From the west there

had now and then come a scent that stirred Kazan uneasily. Since noon he had sniffed that wind. Twice McGill had heard him growling deep in his throat, and once, when the scent had come stronger than usual, he had bared his fangs, and the bristles stood up along his spine.

For an hour after striking camp the professor did not build a fire, but sat looking up the shore of the lake through his hunting glass. It was dusk when he returned to where he had put up his tent and chained the dogs. For a few moments he stood unobserved, looking at the wolf-dog. Kazan was still uneasy. He lay *facing* the west. McGill made note of this, for the big Dane lay behind Kazan—to the east.

Behind a rock McGill built a very small fire, and prepared supper. After this he went into the tent, and when he came out he carried a blanket under his arm. He chuckled as he stood for a moment over Kazan.

"We're not going to sleep in there tonight, old boy," he said. "I don't like what you've found in the west wind." He laughed and buried himself in a clump of stunted Banksians thirty paces from the tent. Here he rolled himself in his blanket, and went to sleep.

It was a quiet, starlit night, and hours afterward Kazan dropped his nose between his forepaws and drowsed. It was the snap

of a twig that roused him. The sound did not awaken the sluggish Dane, but instantly Kazan's head was alert, his keen nostrils sniffing the air. What he had smelled all day was heavy about him now.

Slowly, from out of the Banksians behind the tent, there came a figure. It was not that of the professor. It approached cautiously, with lowered head and hunched shoulders, and the starlight revealed the murderous face of Sandy McTrigger. Kazan crouched low. He laid his head flat between his forepaws. His long fangs gleamed. But he made no sound that betrayed his concealment under a thick Banksian shrub. Step by step Sandy approached, and at last he reached the flap of the tent. He did not carry a club or a whip in his hand now. In the place of either of those was the glitter of steel. At the door to the tent he paused, and peered in, his back to Kazan.

Silently, swiftly—the wolf now, in every movement—Kazan came to his feet. He forgot the chain that held him. Ten feet away stood the enemy he hated above all others he had ever known. Every ounce of strength in his splendid body gathered itself for the spring. And then he leaped. This time the chain did not pull him back, almost neck-broken. Age and the elements had weakened the leather collar he had worn since the days of his slavery

in the traces, and it gave way with a snap. Sandy turned, and in a second leap Kazan's fangs sank into the flesh of his arm. With a startled cry the man fell, and as they rolled over on the ground the big Dane's deep voice rolled out in thunderous alarm.

In the fall Kazan's hold was broken. In an instant he was on his feet, ready for another attack. And then the change came. He was *free*. The collar was gone from his neck. The forest, the stars, the whispering wind were all about him. *Here* were men, and off there was—Gray Wolf! His ears dropped, and he turned swiftly, and slipped like a shadow back into the glorious freedom of his world.

A hundred yards away something stopped him for an instant. It was not the big Dane's voice, but the sharp *crack—crack—crack* of the little professor's automatic. And above that sound there rose the voice of Sandy McTrigger in a weird and terrible cry.

II

Mile after mile Kazan went on. For a time he was oppressed by the shivering note of death that had come to him in Sandy McTrigger's cry, and he slipped through the Banksians like a shadow, his ears flattened, his tail trailing,

his hind quarters betraying that curious slinking quality of the wolf and dog stealing away from danger. Then he came out upon a plain, and the stillness, the billion stars in the clear vault of the sky, and the keen air that carried with it a breath of the Arctic barrens brought him alert and questing. He faced in the direction of the wind. Somewhere off there, far to the south and west, was Gray Wolf. For the first time in many weeks he sat back on his haunches and gave the deep and vibrant call that echoed weirdly for miles about him. Back in the Banksians the big Dane heard it, and whined. From over the still body of Sandy McTrigger the little professor looked up with a white, tense face, and listened for a second cry.

But to that first call instinct told Kazan that there would be no answer, and now he struck out swiftly, galloping mile after mile, as a dog follows the trail of its master home. He did not turn back to the lake, nor was his direction toward Red Gold City. As straight as he might have followed a road blazed by the hand of man, he cut across the forty miles of plain and swamp and forest and rocky ridge that lay between him and the McFarlane. All that night he did not call again for Gray Wolf. With him, reasoning was a process brought about by habit—by precedent, and as Gray Wolf had waited for him many times before,

he believed that she would be waiting for him now somewhere near the sandbar.

By dawn he had reached the river, within three miles of the sandbar. Scarcely was the sun up when he stood on the white strip of sand where he and Gray Wolf had come down to drink. Expectantly and confidently he looked about him for Gray Wolf, whining softly and wagging his tail. He began to search for her scent, but rains had washed even her footprints from the clean sand. All that day he searched for her along the river and out on the plain. Again and again he sat back on his haunches and sent out his mating cry to her.

And slowly, as he did these things, nature was working in him that miracle of the wild which the Crees have named the "spirit call." As it had worked in Gray Wolf, so now it stirred the blood of Kazan. With the going of the sun, and the sweeping about him of shadowy night, he turned more and more to the south and east. His whole world was made up of the trails over which he had hunted. That world, in his comprehension of it, ran from the McFarlane in a narrow trail through the forest and over the plains to the little valley from which the beavers had driven them. If Gray Wolf was not here—she was there, and tirelessly he resumed his quest of her.

Not until the stars were fading out of the

sky again, and gray day was giving place to night, did exhaustion and hunger stop him. He killed a rabbit, and for hours after he had feasted, he lay close to his kill, and slept. Then he went on.

The fourth night he came to the little valley between the two ridges, and under the stars, more brilliant now in the chill clearness of the early autumn nights, he followed the creek down into their old swamp home. It was broad day when he reached the edge of the great beaver pond that now completely surrounded the windfall under which Gray Wolf's second-born had come into the world. Broken Tooth and the other beavers had wrought a big change in what had once been his home and Gray Wolf's, and for many minutes Kazan stood silent and motionless at the edge of the pond, sniffing the air heavy with the unpleasant odor of the usurpers.

Until now his spirit had remained unbroken. Footsore, with thinned sides and gaunt head, he circled slowly through the swamp. All that day he searched. And his crest lay flat now, and there was a hunted look in the droop of his shoulders and in the shifting look in his eyes. Gray Wolf was gone. Slowly nature was impinging that fact upon him. She had passed out of his world and out of his life, and he was filled with a loneliness and a grief so great that

the forest seemed strange, and the stillness of the wild a thing that now oppressed and frightened him.

Once more the dog in him was mastering the wolf. With Gray Wolf he had possessed the world of freedom. Without her, that world was so big and strange and empty that it appalled him.

That night he slunk under a log. Deep in the night he grieved in his slumber, like a child. And day after day, and night after night, Kazan remained a slinking creature of the big swamp, mourning for the one creature that had brought him out of chaos into light, who had filled his world for him, and who, in going from him, had taken from this world even the things that Gray Wolf had lost in her blindness.

III

In the golden glow of the autumn sun there one day came up the stream overlooked by the Sun Rock a man, a woman, and a child. Almost two years had passed since Joan, the girl-wife, had left these regions with her trapper husband for a taste of that distant world which is known as Civilization. All her life, except the years she had passed at a Mission school over at Fort Churchill, she had lived in the forests—a wild flower of nature as truly as the velvety

bakneesh flowers among the rocks. And civilization had done for her what it had done for many another wild flower transplanted from the depths of the wilderness. She did not look as she did in the days when she was Kazan's mistress, and when the wolf-dog's loyalty was divided between Gray Wolf, on the Sun Rock, and Joan, in the cabin half a mile away. Her cheeks were thin. Her blue eyes had lost their luster. She coughed, and when she coughed the man looked at her with love and fear in his eyes.

But now, slowly, the man had begun to see the transformation, and on the day their canoe pointed up the stream and into the wonderful valley that had been their home before the call of the distant city came to them, he noted the flush gathering once more in her cheeks, the fuller redness of her lips, and the gathering glow of happiness and content in her eyes. He laughed softly as he saw these things, and he blessed the forests.

"You are happy again, Joan," he said joyously. "The doctors were right. You are a part of the forests."

"Yes, I am happy," she whispered, and suddenly there came a little thrill into her voice, and she pointed to a white finger of sand running out into the stream. "Do you remember —years and years ago, it seems—that Kazan

left us here? *She* was on the sand over there, calling to him. Do you remember?" There came a little tremble to her mouth. "I wonder —where they—have gone."

The cabin was as they had left it. Only the crimson *bakneesh* had grown up about it, and shrubs and tall grass had sprung up near its walls. Once more it took on life, and day by day the color came deeper into Joan's cheeks, and her voice was filled with its old wild sweetness of song. Joan's husband cleared the trails over his old trap-lines, and Joan and the little Joan, who romped and talked now, transformed the cabin into *home*. One night the man returned to the cabin late, and when he came in there was a glow of excitement in Joan's blue eyes.

"Did you hear it?" she asked. "Did you hear—*the call?*"

He nodded, stroking her soft hair.

"I was a mile back in the creek swamp," he said. "I heard it!"

Joan's hands clutched his arms.

"It wasn't Kazan," she said. "I would recognize his voice. But it seemed to me it was like the other—the call that came that morning from the sandbar, his mate's."

The man was thinking. Joan's fingers tightened. She was breathing a little quickly.

"Will you promise me this?" she asked.

"Will you promise me that you will never hunt or trap for wolves?"

"I had thought of that," he replied. "I thought of it—after I heard the call. Yes, I will promise."

Joan's arms stole up about his neck.

"We loved Kazan," she whispered. "And you might kill him—or her."

Suddenly she stopped. Both listened. The door was a little ajar, and to them there came again the wailing mate-call of the wolf. Joan ran to the door. Her husband followed. Together they stood silent, and with tense breath Joan pointed over the starlit plain.

"Listen! Listen!" she commanded. "It's her cry, *and it came from the Sun Rock!*"

She ran out into the night, forgetting that the man was close behind her now, forgetting that little Joan was alone in her bed. And to them, from miles and miles across the plain, there came a wailing cry in answer—a cry that seemed a part of the wind, and that thrilled Joan until her breath broke in a strange sob.

Farther out on the plain she went, and then stopped, with the golden glow of the autumn moon and the stars shimmering in her hair and eyes. It was many minutes before the cry came again, and then it was so near that Joan put her hands to her mouth, and her cry rang out over the plain as of old:

"Kazan! Kazan! Kazan!"

At the top of the Sun Rock, Gray Wolf—gaunt and thinned by starvation—heard the woman's cry, and the call that was in her throat died away in a whine. And to the north a swiftly moving shadow stopped for a moment, and stood like a thing of rock under the starlight. It was Kazan. A strange fire leaped through his body. Every fiber of his brute understanding was afire with the knowledge that here was *home.* It was here, long ago, that he had lived, and loved, and fought—and all at once the dreams that had grown faded and indistinct in his memory came back to him as real, living things. For, coming to him faintly over the plain, *he heard Joan's voice!*

In the starlight Joan stood, tense and white, when from out of the pale mists of the moonglow he came to her, cringing on his belly, panting and wind-run, and with a strange whining note in his throat. To Joan, Kazan was more than mere dog. Next to her husband and baby she loved him. There passed through her mind a day when he had saved her and the baby from the wolves—and again the scene of that other day when he had leaped upon the giant husky that was at the throat of little Joan. . . . As her arms hugged Kazan's great shaggy head up to her, the man heard the whining, gasping joy of the beast.

And then there came once more across the plain Gray Wolf's mate-seeking cry of grief and of loneliness. Swiftly, as though struck by a lash, Kazan was on his feet. In another instant he was gone.

"*Now* do you believe?" cried Joan pantingly. "*Now* do you believe in the God of my world—the God I have lived with, the God that gives souls to the wild things, the God that —that has brought—us all—together—once more—*home!*"

His arms closed gently about her.

"I believe, my Joan," he whispered. Afterward they sat in the starlight in front of the cabin. But they did not hear again that lonely cry from the Sun Rock. Joan and her husband understood. "He'll visit us again tomorrow," the man said at last. "Come, Joan, let us go to bed." Together they entered the cabin. And that night, side by side, Kazan and Gray Wolf hunted again on the moonlit plain.

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MEREDITH NICHOLSON

FOREWORD

I ALWAYS find myself uncomfortable in the company of those who delight in literary shop-talk. Nothing I have ever heard or read on the subject of writing has seemed to me of any value to a practitioner of the art in so far as methods, hours of work and such matters are concerned. One writes or one doesn't, and that seems to me the end on't. In the domain of style there is, of course, a valuable and fascinating literature, but the ability to write English prose of beauty and power pertains to the higher branches of the craft.

The choice and use of a subject is a thing apart. Here we enter a no-man's land "where all is possible and all unknown." Pretending to no special knowledge of this matter, I will, however, acknowledge myself a firm believer in the operation of subconscious processes that assist in the development of ideas. Once an idea takes root in the mind and has a fertile germ in it, it immediately begins to grow. And as the plant matures it thrusts its way through the crust teasingly from time to time, until finally it stands up in full bloom in the conscious mind. It is obviously difficult for anyone engaged in the creative arts to take himself as a subject for psychological analysis. For the mind's operation is a mystery. The origin of ideas belongs in the realm of the unfathomable. If it were not for arousing the ire of trained psychologists, there are a good many things that I could suggest from my own experience that hint of

forces at work in all of us that lure us to a twilight borderland beyond which nothing is quite real but all is touched with mystery.

Nothing is more interesting than the manner in which the inevitable form in which a thing should be written is instantly evident when the idea itself—the device—becomes clear and definite. When I was a newspaper reporter and had got my facts on some assignment, I found myself visualizing the story as it would appear in print, even to the first sentence and the arrangement of paragraphs, on my way back to the office. There is, beyond question, a journalistic sense that enables one instantaneously to appraise material and determine its treatment. I have written almost everything from five-line news items, newspaper editorial, verse, history, essays and short stories to novels of various kinds, and I have always found that first instinctive sense of value and form a pretty safe guide.

When a short-story idea strikes me I draw a line like the flight of a rocket across a piece of paper and write across it a few words indicating the chief incidents of the story. The back of an envelope suffices for this; I never make elaborate notes even for a novel, trusting to the merry little imps in the subconscious cellar to keep me supplied with material. And they are wilful little devils, who are likely to go on a strike at times; but as nothing can be done to stimulate their efforts, it's the wiser plan to try to forget what it is you want to fashion and mold until, some day when you are watching a ball game or hearing a symphony or doing something else utterly unrelated to the particular idea that has tormented you, the whole thing stands there before your eyes quite

as unexpectedly as though a magician had waved his wand and wrought a miracle you can't explain—and need not.

"The Third Man" struck me one day in a hotel room where, beside the telephone, was a tablet on which some scribbling of the last guest remained—a curious geometrical figure roughly outlined all over the sheet. I had often noticed the habit men have—women seem less addicted to it—of marking with a pencil whilé the mind is engaged with something wholly alien. As I reflected upon this I found not only that I myself drew symbols or scrawled words when preoccupied, but that I constantly repeated the same signs and words. It occurred to me that a man might leave incriminating testimony by such idle pencilings. This idea having interested me for an hour, I forgot all about it until one day the whole story of "The Third Man" rose out of the subcellar and demanded to be written.

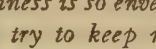
I employed in this story a character I have used frequently in short stories—a banker with an adventurous, quixotic strain and a sincere interest in helping the underdog. The idea of giving a dinner and placing at every plate a tablet and pencil and (no one being in the secret) waiting to see whether a certain man, never suspected of a murder, would not from habit draw a certain figure which the host had found on a scrap of paper at the scene of the crime, gives an opportunity for that suspensive interest which is essential to a mystery tale.

I may add that I never have found a device for a story, long or short, when I was consciously seeking it. Others no doubt have a very different experience, and they

are luckier than those of us who are obliged to wait for the subconscious imps to throw up the trapdoor and disclose something. There are well-known instances of writers dreaming a plot, but only once have I been so favored. The thing looked quite splendid while I slept, but it dissolved so quickly at the moment of waking that I was unable to piece it together.

It may be of interest to the student of such matters that practically every idea that I have ever developed came to me at some place which I always identify with it. And further, when this has happened on the street or in some room of a house, I never revisit the place without an odd feeling—a curious, disturbing uneasiness. There is a street corner in my home town that I avoid, for there, I remember distinctly, the device for a story occurred to me. The story was, I may say, one of the most successful I ever wrote, and yet by some freakish and inexplicable association of ideas I don't like to pass that corner! I should add that neither the corner nor anything pertaining to it figured in the story or was in any way related to it.

So it will readily be seen that I am unlikely to be of service to students or beginners, for in very plain terms I must admit that I do not know how I do things. It is because the whole business is so enveloped in mystery that I enjoy writing and try to keep myself in a receptive state for those happy surprises, without which I should quickly find myself without material and seeking other occupation.



The THIRD MAN

BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON

I

WHEN Webster G. Burgess asked ten of his cronies to dine with him at the University Club on a night in January they assumed that the president of the White River National had been indulging in another adventure which he wished to tell them about.

In spite of their constant predictions that if he didn't stop hiding crooks in his house and playing tricks on the Police Department he would ultimately find himself in jail, Mr. Burgess continued to find amusement in frequent dallyings with gentlemen of the underworld. In a town of approximately three hundred thousand people a banker is expected to go to church on Sundays and otherwise conduct himself as a decent, orderly, and law-abiding citizen, but the president of the White River National did not see things in that light.

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As a member of the Board of Directors of the Released Prisoners' Aid Society he was always ready with the excuse that his heart was deeply moved by the misfortunes of those who keep to the dark side of the street, and that sincere philanthropy covered all his sins in their behalf.

When his friends met at the club and found Governor Eastman one of the dinner party, they resented the presence of that dignitary as likely to impose restraints upon Burgess, who, for all his jauntiness, was not wholly without discretion. But the governor was a good fellow, as they all knew, and a story-teller of wide reputation. Moreover, he was taking his job seriously, and, being practical men, they liked this about him. It was said that no governor since Civil War times had spent so many hours at his desk or had shown the same zeal and capacity for gathering information at first hand touching all departments of the State government. Eastman, as the country knows, is an independent character, and it was this quality, which he had shown first as a prosecuting attorney, that had attracted attention and landed him in the seat of the Hoosier governors.

"I suppose," remarked Kemp as they sat down, "that these tablets are scattered around the table so we can make notes of the clever

things that will be said here tonight. It's a good idea and gives me a chance to steal some of your stories, governor."

A scratch pad with pencil attached had been placed at each plate, and the diners spent several minutes in chaffing Burgess as to the purpose of this unusual table decoration.

"I guess," said Goring, "that Web is going to ask us to write limericks for a prize and that the governor is here to judge the contest. Indoor winter sports don't appeal to me; I pass."

"I'm going to write notes to the House Committee on mine," said Fanning; "the food in this club is not what it used to be, and it's about time somebody kicked."

"As I've frequently told you," remarked Burgess, smiling upon them from the head of the table, "you fellows have no imagination. You'd never guess what those tablets are for, and maybe I'll never tell you."

"Nothing is so innocent as a piece of white paper," said the governor, eyeing his tablet. "We'd better be careful not to jot down anything that might fly up and hit us afterward. For all we know, it may be a scheme to get our signatures for Burgess to stick on notes without relief from valuation or appraisement laws. It's about time for another Bohemian oats swindle, and our friend Burgess may expect to work us for the price of the dinner."

"Web's bound to go to jail some day," remarked Ramsay, the surgeon, "and he'd better do it while you're in office, governor. You may not know that he's hand in glove with all the criminals in the country: he quit poker so he could give all his time to playing with crooks."

"The warden of the penitentiary has warned me against him," replied the governor easily. "Burgess has a man at the gate to meet convicts as they emerge, and all the really bad ones are sent down here for Burgess to put up at this club."

"I never did that but once," Burgess protested, "and that was only because my mother-in-law was visiting me and I was afraid she wouldn't stand for a burglar as a fellow guest. My wife's got used to 'em. But the joke of putting that chap up here at the club isn't on me, but on Ramsay and Colton. They had luncheon with him one day and thanked me afterward for introducing them to so interesting a man. I told them he was a manufacturer from St. Louis, and they swallowed it whole. Pettit was the name, but he has string of aliases as long as this table, and there's not a rogues' gallery in the country where he isn't indexed. You remember, Colton, he talked a good deal of his travels, and he could do so honestly, as he'd cracked safes all the way from Boston to Seattle."

Ramsay and Colton protested that this could not be so; that the man they had luncheon with was a shoe manufacturer and had talked of his business as only an expert could.

The governor and Burgess exchanged glances, and both laughed.

"He knew the shoe business all right enough," said Burgess, "for he learned it in the penitentiary and proved so efficient that they made him foreman of the shop!"

"I suppose," said Kemp, "that you've got another crook coming to take that vacant chair. You'd better tell us about him so we won't commit any social errors."

At the governor's right there was an empty place, and Burgess remarked carelessly that they were shy a man, but that he would turn up later.

"I've asked Tate, a banker at Lorinsburg, to join us and he'll be along after a while. Any of you know Tate? One of our scouts recently persuaded him to transfer his account to us, and as this is the first time he's been in town since the change I thought it only decent to show him some attention. We're both directors in a company that's trying to develop a tile factory in his town, so you needn't be afraid I'm going to put anything over on you. Tate's attending a meeting tonight from which I am regrettably

absent! He promised to be here before we got down to the coffee."

As the dinner progressed the governor was encouraged to tell stories, and acceded good-naturedly by recounting some amusing things that had happened in the course of his official duties.

"But it isn't all so funny," he said gravely after keeping them in a roar for half an hour. "In a State as big as this a good many disagreeable things happen, and people come to me every day with heartbreaking stories. There's nothing that causes me more anxiety than the appeals for pardon; if the pardoning power were taken away from me, I'd be a much happier man. The Board of Pardons winnows out the cases, but even at that there's enough to keep me uncomfortable. It isn't the pleasantest feeling in the world that as you go to bed at night somebody may be suffering punishment unjustly, and that it's up to you to find it out. When a woman comes in backed by a child or two and cries all over your office about her husband who's doing time and tells you he wasn't guilty, it doesn't cheer you much; not by a jugful! Wives, mothers, and sisters: the wives shed more tears, the sisters put up the best argument, but the mothers give you more sleepless nights."

"If it were up to me," commented Burgess, "I'm afraid I'd turn 'em all out!"

"You would," chorused the table derisively, "and when you'd emptied the penitentiaries you'd burn 'em down!"

"Of course there's bound to be cases of flagrant injustice," suggested Kemp. "And the feelings of a man who is locked up for a crime he never committed must be horrible. We hear now and then of such cases and it always shakes my faith in the law."

"The law does the best it can," replied the governor a little defensively, "but, as you say, mistakes do occur. The old saying that murder will out is no good; we can all remember cases where the truth was never known. Mistakes occur constantly, and it's the fear of not rectifying them that's making a nervous wreck of me. I have in my pocket now a blank pardon that I meant to sign before I left my office, but I couldn't quite bring myself to the point. The Pardon Board has made the recommendation, not on the grounds of injustice—more, I'm afraid, out of sympathy than anything else—and we have to be careful of our sympathies in these matters. And here again there's a wife to reckon with. She's been at my office nearly every day for a year, and she's gone to my wife repeatedly to enlist her support. And it's largely through Mrs. Eastman's insistence that

I've spent many weeks studying the case. It's a murder: what appeared to be a heartless, cold-blooded assassination. And some of you may recall it—the Avery case, seven years ago, in Salem County."

Half the men had never heard of it and the others recalled it only vaguely.

"It was an interesting case," Burgess remarked, wishing to draw the governor out. "George Avery was a man of some importance down there and stood high in the community. He owned a quarry almost eleven miles from Torrenceville and maintained a bungalow on the quarry land where he used to entertain his friends with quail-hunting and perhaps now and then with a poker party. He killed a man named Reynolds who was his guest. As I remember, there seemed to be no great mystery about it, and Avery's defense was a mere disavowal and a brilliant flourish of character witnesses."

"For all anybody ever knew, it was a plain case, as Burgess says," the governor began. "Avery and Reynolds were business acquaintances and Avery had invited Reynolds down there to discuss the merging of their quarry interests. Reynolds was found dead a little way from the bungalow by some of the quarry laborers. He had been beaten on the head with a club in the most barbarous fashion.

Reynolds's overcoat was torn off and the buttons ripped from his waistcoat, pointing to a fierce struggle before his assailant got him down and pounded the life out of him. The purpose was clearly not robbery, as Reynolds had a considerable sum of money on his person that was left untouched. When the men who found the body went to rouse Avery he collapsed when told that Reynolds was dead. In fact, he lay in a stupor for a week, and they could get nothing out of him. Tracks? No; it was a cold December night and the ground was frozen.

"Reynolds had meant to take a midnight train for Chicago, and Avery had wired for special orders to stop at the quarry station, to save Reynolds the trouble of driving into Torrenceville. One might have supposed that Avery would accompany his visitor to the station, particularly as it was not a regular stop for night trains and the way across the fields was a little rough. I've personally been over all the ground. There are many difficult and inexplicable things about the case, the absence of motive being one of them. The State asserted business jealousy and substantiated it to a certain extent, and the fact that Avery had taken the initiative in the matter of combining their quarry interests and might have used

undue pressure on Reynolds to force him to the deal to be considered."

The governor lapsed into silence, seemingly lost in reverie. With his right hand he was scribbling idly on the tablet that lay by his plate. The others, having settled themselves comfortably in their chairs, hoping to hear more of the murder, were disappointed when he ceased speaking. Burgess's usual calm, assured air deserted him. He seemed unwontedly restless, and they saw him glance furtively at his watch.

"Please, governor, won't you go on with the story?" pleaded Colton. "You know that nothing that's said at one of Web's parties ever goes out of the room."

"That," laughed the governor, "is probably unfortunate, as most of his stories ought to go to the grand jury. But if I may talk here into the private ear of you gentlemen I will go on a little further. I've got to make up my mind in the next hour or two about this case, and it may help me to reach a conclusion to think aloud about it."

"You needn't be afraid of us," said Burgess encouragingly. "We've been meeting here—about the same crowd—once a month for five years, and nobody has ever blabbed anything."

"All right; we'll go a bit further. Avery's stubborn silence was a contributing factor in

his prompt conviction. A college graduate, a high-strung, nervous man, hard-working and tremendously ambitious; successful, reasonably prosperous, happy in his marriage, and with every reason for living straight: there you have George Avery as I make him out to have been when this calamity befell him. There was just one lapse, one error, in his life, but that didn't figure in the case, and I won't speak of it now. His conduct from the moment of his arrest, a week following the murder, and only after every other possible clue had been exhausted by the local authorities, was that of a man mutely resigned to his fate. I find from the records that he remained at the bungalow in care of a physician, utterly dazed, it seemed, by the thing he had done, until a warrant was issued and he was put in jail. He's been a prisoner ever since, and his silence has been unbroken to this day. His wife assures me that he never, not even to her, said one word about the case more than to declare his innocence. I've seen him at the penitentiary on two occasions, but could get nothing out of him. In fact, I exhausted any ingenuity I may have in attempting to surprise him into some admission that would give me ground for pardoning him, but without learning anything that was not in the State's case. They're using him as a bookkeeper, and he's made a fine record: a model

convict. The long confinement has told seriously on his health, which is the burden of his wife's plea for his release, but he wouldn't even discuss that.

"There was no one else at the bungalow on the night of the murder," the governor continued. "It was Avery's habit to get his meals at the house of the quarry superintendent, about five hundred yards away, and the superintendent's wife cared for the bungalow, but the men I've had at work couldn't find anything in that to hang a clue on. You see, gentlemen, after seven years it's not easy to work up a case, but two expert detectives that I employed privately to make some investigations along lines I suggested have been of great assistance. Failing to catch the scent where the trail started, I set them to work backward from a point utterly remote from the scene. It was a guess, and ordinarily it would have failed, but in this case it has brought results that are all but convincing."

The tablets and pencils that had been distributed along the table had not been neglected. The guests, without exception, had been drawing or scribbling; Colton had amused himself by sketching the governor's profile. Burgess seemed not to be giving his undivided attention to the governor's review of the case. He continued to fidget, and his eyes swept the table

with veiled amusement. Then he tapped a bell and a waiter appeared.

"Pardon me a moment, governor, till the cigars are passed again."

In his round with the cigar tray the Jap, evidently by prearrangement, collected the tablets and laid them in front of Burgess.

"Changed your mind about the limerick contest, Web?" asked someone.

"Not at all," said Burgess carelessly; "the tablets have fulfilled their purpose. It was only a silly idea of mine anyhow." They noticed, however, that a tablet was left at the still vacant place that awaited the belated guest, and they wondered at this, surmising that Burgess had planned the dinner carefully and that the governor's discussion of the Avery case was by connivance with their host. With a quickening of interest they drew their chairs closer to the table.

"The prosecuting attorney who represented the State in the trial is now a judge of the Circuit Court," the governor resumed when the door closed upon the waiter. "I have had many talks with him about this case. He confesses that there are things about it that still puzzle him. The evidence was purely circumstantial, as I have already indicated; but circumstantial evidence, as Thoreau once remarked, may be very convincing, as when you

find a trout in the milk! But when two men have spent a day together in the house of one of them, and the other is found dead in a lonely place not far away, and suspicion attaches to no one but the survivor—not even the tramp who usually figures in such speculations—a jury of twelve farmers may be pardoned for taking the State's view of the matter."

"The motive you spoke of, business jealousy, doesn't seem quite adequate unless it could be established that they had quarreled and that there was a clear showing of enmity," suggested Fullerton, the lawyer.

"You are quite right, and the man who prosecuted Avery admits it," the governor answered.

"There may have been a third man in the affair," suggested Ramsay, "and I suppose the cynical must have suggested the usual woman in the case."

"I dare say those possibilities were thrashed out at the time," the governor replied; "but the only woman in this case is Avery's wife, and she and Reynolds had never met. I have found nothing to sustain any suspicion that there was a woman in the case. Avery's ostensible purpose in asking Reynolds to visit him at that out-of-the-way place was merely that they could discuss the combination of their quarry interests privately, and close to Avery's plant. It

seems that Avery had undertaken the organization of a big company to take over a number of quarries whose product was similar, and that he wished to confer secretly with Reynolds to secure his sanction to a selling agreement before the others he wanted to get into the combination heard of it. That, of course, is perfectly plausible; I could make a good argument justifying that. Reynolds, like many small capitalists in country towns, had a number of irons in the fire and had done some promoting on his own hook. All the financial genius and all the financial crookedness aren't confined to Wall Street, though I forget that sometimes when I'm on the stump! I'm disposed to think from what I've learned of both of them that Avery wasn't likely to put anything over on Reynolds, who was no child in business matters. And there was nothing to show that Avery had got him down there for any other purpose than to effect a merger of quarry interests for their mutual benefit."

"There probably were papers to substantiate that," suggested Fullerton; "correspondence and that sort of thing."

"Certainly; I have gone into that," the governor replied. "All the papers remain in the office of the prosecuting attorney, and I have examined them carefully. Now, if Avery had been able to throw suspicion on some one

else you'd think he'd have done so. And if there had been a third person at the bungalow that night you'd imagine that Avery would have said so; it's not in human nature for one man to take the blame for another's crime, and yet we do hear of such things, and I have read novels and seen plays built upon that idea. But here is Avery with fifteen years more to serve, and, if he's been bearing the burden and suffering the penalty of another's sin, I must say that he's taking it all in an amazing spirit of self-sacrifice."

"Of course," said Fullerton, "Reynolds may have had an enemy who followed him there and lay in wait for him. Or Avery may have connived at the crime without being really the assailant. That is conceivable."

"We'll change the subject for a moment," said the governor, "and return to our muttons later."

He spoke in a low tone to Burgess, who looked at his watch and answered audibly:

"We have half an hour more."

The governor nodded and, with a whimsical smile, began turning over the tablets.

"These pads were placed before you for a purpose which I will now explain. I apologize for taking advantage of you, but you will pardon me, I'm sure, when I tell you my reason. I've dipped into psychology lately with a view

to learning something of the mind's eccentricities. We all do things constantly without conscious effort, as you know; we perform acts automatically without the slightest idea that we are doing them. At meetings of our State boards I've noticed that nobody ever uses the pads that are always provided except to scribble on. Many people have that habit of scribbling on anything that's handy. Hotel keepers, knowing this, provide pads of paper ostensibly for memoranda that guests may want to make while at the telephone, but really to keep them from defacing the wall. Left alone with pencil and paper, most of us will scribble something or draw meaningless figures.

"Sometimes it's indicative of a deliberate turn of mind; again it's sheer nervousness. After I had discussed this with a well-known psychologist I began watching myself and found that I made a succession of figure eights looped together in a certain way—I've been doing it here!

"And now," he went on with a chuckle, "you gentlemen have been indulging this same propensity as you listened to me. I find on one pad the word Napoleon written twenty times with a lot of flourishes; another has traced a dozen profiles of a man with a bulbous nose: it is the same gentleman, I find, who honored me by drawing me with a triple chin—for which I

thank him. And here's what looks like a dog kennel repeated down the sheet. Still another has sketched the American flag all over the page. If the patriotic gentleman who drew the flag will make himself known, I should like to ask him whether he's conscious of having done that before?"

"I'm guilty, governor," Fullerton responded. "I believe it is a habit of mine. I've caught myself doing it scores of times."

"I'm responsible for the man with the fat nose," confessed Colton; "I've been drawing him for years without ever improving my draftsmanship."

"That will do," said the governor, glancing at the door. "We won't take time to speak of the others, though you may be relieved to know that I haven't got any evidence against you. Burgess, please get these works of art out of the room. We'll go back to the Avery case. In going over the papers I found that the prosecuting attorney in his search of the bungalow the morning after the murder found a number of pieces of paper that bore an odd, irregular sort of sketch. I'm going to pass one of them round, but please send it back to me immediately."

He produced a sheet of letter paper that bore traces of hasty crumpling but had been smoothed out again, and held it up. It bore

the lithographed name of the Avery Quarry Company. On it was drawn this device:

"Please note," said the governor as the paper passed from hand to hand, "that that same device is traced there five times, sometimes more irregularly than others, but the general form is the same. Now, in the fireplace of the bungalow living-room they found this and three other sheets of the same stationery that bore this same figure. It seems a fair assumption that someone sitting at a table had amused himself by sketching these outlines and then, when he had filled the sheet, tore it off and threw it into the fireplace, wholly unconscious of what he was doing. The prosecutor attached no importance to these sheets, and it was only by chance that they were stuck away in the file box with the other documents in the case."

"Then you suspect that there was a third man in the bungalow that night?" Ramsay asked.

The governor nodded gravely.

"Yes; I have some little proof of it, quite a bit of proof, in fact. I have even had the waste-basket of the suspect examined for a consider-

able period. Knowing Burgess's interest in such matters, I have been using him to get me certain information I very much wanted. And our friend is a very successful person! I wanted to see the man I have in mind and study him a little when he was off-guard, and Burgess has arranged that for me, though he had to go into the tile business to do it! As you can readily see, I could hardly drag him to my office, so this little party was gotten up to give me a chance to look him over at leisure."

"Tate!" exclaimed several of the men.

"You can see that this is a very delicate matter," said the governor slowly. "Burgess thought it better not to have a smaller party, as Tate, whom I never saw, might think it a frame-up. So you see we are using you as stool-pigeons, so to speak. Burgess vouches for you as men of discretion and tact; and it will be your business to keep Tate amused and his attention away from me while I observe him a little."

"And when I give the signal you're to go into the library and look at picture books," Burgess added.

"That's not fair!" said Fullerton. "We want to see the end of it!"

"I'm so nervous," said Colton, "I'm likely to scream at any minute!"

"Don't do it!" Burgess admonished. "The new House Committee is very touchy about noise in the private dining-rooms, and besides I've got a lot of scenery set for the rest of the evening, and I don't want you fellows to spoil it."

"It begins to look," remarked the governor, glancing at his watch, "as though some of our scenery might have got lost."

"He'd hardly bolt," Burgess replied; "he knows of no reason why he should! I told the doorman to send him right up. When he comes there will be no more references to the Avery case: you all understand?"

They murmured their acquiescence, and a solemn hush fell upon them as they turned involuntarily toward the vacant chair.

"This will never do!" exclaimed the governor, who seemed to be the one tranquil person in the room. "We must be telling stories and giving an imitation of weary business men having a jolly time. But I'm tired of talking; some of the good story-tellers ought to be stirred up."

With a little prodding Fullerton took the lead, but was able to win only grudging laughter. Colton was trying his hand at diverting them when they were startled by a knock. Burgess was at the door instantly and flung it open.

II

"Ah, Tate! Come right in; the party hasn't started yet!"

The newcomer was a short, thick-set man, clean-shaven, with coarse dark hair streaked with gray. The hand he gave the men in succession as they gathered about him for Burgess's introduction was broad and heavy. He offered it limply, with an air of embarrassment.

"Governor Eastman, Mr. Tate; that's your seat by the governor, Tate," said Burgess. "We were pust listening to some old stories from some of these fellows, so you haven't missed anything. I hope they didn't need me at that tile meeting; I never attend night meetings: they spoil my sleep, which my doctor says I've got to have."

"Night meetings," said the Governor, "always give me a grouch the next morning. A party like this doesn't, of course!"

"Up in the country where I live we still stick to lodge meeting as an excuse when we want a night off," Tate remarked.

They laughed more loudly than was necessary to put him at ease. He refused Burgess's offer of food and drink and when someone started a political discussio nthey conspired to draw him into it. He was County Chairman of

the party not then in power and complained good-naturedly to the governor of the big plurality Eastman had rolled up in the last election. He talked slowly, with a kind of dogged emphasis, and it was evident that politics was a subject to his taste. His brown eyes, they were noting, were curiously large and full, with a bilious tinge in the white. He met a glance steadily, with, indeed, an almost disconcerting directness.

Where the governor sat became, by imperceptible degrees, the head of the table as he began seriously and frankly discussing the points of difference between the existing parties, accompanied by clean-cut characterizations of the great leaders.

There was nothing to indicate that anything lay behind his talk; to all appearances his auditors were absorbed in what he was saying. Tate had accepted a cigar, which he did not light but kept twisting slowly in his thick fingers.

"We Democrats have had to change our minds about a good many things," the governor was saying. "Of course we're not going back to Jefferson" (he smiled broadly and waited for them to praise his magnanimity in approaching so near to an impious admission), "but the world has spun around a good many times since Jefferson's day. What I think we Democrats

do and do splendidly is to keep close to the changing current of public opinion; sometimes it seems likely to wash us down, as in the free-silver days; but we give, probably without always realizing it, a chance for the people to express themselves on new questions, and if we've stood for some foolish policies at times the country's the better for having passed on them. These great contests clear the air like a storm, and we all go peacefully about our business afterward."

As he continued they were all covertly watching Tate, who dropped his cigar and began playing with the pencil before him, absently winding and unwinding it upon the string that held it to the tablet. They were feigning an absorption in the governor's recital which their quick, nervous glances at Tate's hand belied. Burgess had pushed back his chair to face the governor more comfortably and was tying knots in his napkin.

Now and then Tate nodded solemnly in affirmation of something the governor said, but without lifting his eyes from the pencil. His broad shoulders were bent over the table, and the men about him were reflecting that this was probably an attitude into which his heavy body often relaxed when he was pondering deeply.

Wearying of the pencil—a trifle of the dance-card variety—he dropped it and drew

his own from his waistcoat pocket. Then, after looking up to join in a laugh at some indictment of Republicanism expressed in droll terms by the governor, he drew the tablet closer and, turning his head slightly to one side, drew a straight line. Burgess frowned as several men changed position the better to watch him. The silence deepened, and the governor's voice rose with a slight oratorical ring. Through a half-open window floated the click of billiard balls in the room below. The governor having come down to the Wilson Administration, went back to Cleveland, whom he praised as a great leader and a great president. In normal circumstances there would have been interruptions and questions and an occasional gibe; and ordinarily the governor, who was not noted for loquacity, would not have talked twenty minutes at a stretch without giving an opportunity to his companions to break in upon him. He was talking, as they all knew, to give Tate time to draw the odd device which it was his habit to sketch when deeply engrossed.

The pencil continued to move over the paper; and from time to time Tate turned the pad and scrutinized his work critically. The men immediately about him watched his hand, wide-eyed, fascinated. There was something uncanny and unreal in the situation: it was like watching a wild animal approaching a trap

and wholly unmindful of its danger. The square box which formed the base of the device was traced clearly; the arcs which were its familiar embellishment were carefully added. The governor, having exhausted Cleveland, went back to Jackson, and Tate finished a second drawing, absorbed in his work and rarely lifting his eyes.

Seeing that Tate had tired of this pastime, the governor brought his lecture to an end, exclaiming:

"Great Scott, Burgess! Why haven't you stopped me! I've said enough here to ruin me with my party, and you hadn't the grace to shut me off."

"I'm glad for one," said Tate, pushing back the pad, "that I got in in time to hear you; I've never known before that any Democrat could be so broad-minded!"

"The governor loosens up a good deal between campaigns," said Burgess, rising. "And now, let's go into the library where the chairs are easier."

The governor rose with the others, but remained by his chair, talking to Tate, until the room cleared, and then resumed his seat.

"This is perfectly comfortable; let's stay here, Mr. Tate. Burgess, close the door, will you."

Tate, hesitated, looked at his watch, and

glanced at Burgess, who sat down as though wishing to humor the governor, and lighted a cigar.

"Mr. Tate," said the governor unhurriedly, "if I'm not mistaken, you are George Avery's brother-in-law."

Tate turned quickly, and his eyes widened in surprise.

"Yes," he answered in slow, even tones; "Avery married my sister."

"Mr. Tate, I have in my pocket a pardon all ready to sign, giving Avery his liberty. His case has troubled me a good deal; I don't want to sign this pardon unless I'm reasonably sure of Avery's innocence. If you were in my place, Mr. Tate, would you sign it?"

The color went out of the man's face and his jaw fell; but he recovered himself quickly.

"Of course, governor, it would be a relief to me, to my sister, all of us, if you could see your way to pardoning George. As you know, I've been doing what I could to bring pressure to bear on the Board of Pardons: everything that seemed proper. Of course," he went on ingratiatingly, "we've all felt the disgrace of the thing."

"Mr. Tate," the governor interrupted, "I have reason to believe that there was a third man at Avery's bungalow the night Reynolds was killed. I've been at some pains to satisfy

myself of that. Did that ever occur to you as a possibility?"

"I suspected that all along," Tate answered, drawing his handkerchief slowly across his face. "I never could believe George Avery guilty; he wasn't that kind of man!"

"I don't think he was myself," the governor replied. "Now, Mr. Tate, on the night of the murder you were not at home, nor on the next day when your sister called you on the long-distance telephone. You were in Louisville, were you not?"

"Yes, certainly; I was in Louisville."

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Tate, you were not in Louisville! You were at Avery's bungalow that night, and you left the quarry station on a freight train that was sidetracked on the quarry switch to allow the Chicago train to pass. You rode to Davos, which you reached at two o'clock in the morning. There you registered under a false name at the Gerber House, and went home the next evening pretending to have been at Louisville. You are a bachelor, and live in rooms over your bank, and there was no one to keep tab on your absences but your clerks, who naturally thought nothing of your going to Louisville, where business often takes you. You were there two days ago, I believe. But that has nothing to do with this matter. When you heard that Reynolds

was dead and Avery under suspicion you answered your sister's summons and hurried to Torrenceville."

"I was in Louisville; I was in Louisville, I tell you!" Tate uttered the words in convulsive gasps. He brushed the perspiration from his forehead impatiently and half rose.

"Please sit down, Mr. Tate. You had had trouble a little while before that with Reynolds about some stock in a creamery concern in your county that he promoted. You thought he had tricked you, and very possibly he had. The creamery business had resulted in a bitter hostility between you: it had gone to such an extent that he had refused to see you again to discuss the matter. You brooded over that until you were not quite sane where Reynolds was concerned: I'll give you the benefit of that. You asked your brother-in-law to tell you when Reynolds was going to see him, and he obligingly consented. We will assume that Avery, a good fellow and anxious to aid you, made a meeting possible. Reynolds wasn't to know that you were to be at the bungalow—he wouldn't have gone if he had known it—and Avery risked the success of his own negotiations by introducing you into his house, out of sheer good will and friendship. You sat at a table in the bungalow living-room and discussed

the matter. Some of these things only I have guessed at; the rest of it——"

"It's a lie; it's all a damned lie! This was a scheme to get me here: you and Burgess have set this up on me! I tell you I wasn't at the quarry; I never saw Reynolds there that night or any other time. My God, if I had been there,—if Avery could have put it on me, would he be doing time for it?"

"Not necessarily, Mr. Tate. Let us go back a little. It had been in your power once to do Avery a great favor, a very great favor. That's true, isn't it?"

Tate stared, clearly surprised, but his quivering lips framed no answer.

"You had known him from boyhood, and shortly after his marriage to your sister it had been in your power to do him a great favor; you had helped him out of a hole and saved the quarry for him. It cost me considerable money to find that out, Mr. Tate, and not a word of help have I had from Avery: be sure of that! He had been guilty of something just a little irregular—in fact, the forging of your name to a note—and you had dealt generously with him, out of your old-time friendship, we will say, or to spare your sister humiliation."

"George was in a corner," said Tate weakly but with manifest relief at the turn of the talk. "He squared it all long ago."

"It's natural, in fact, instinctive, for a man to protect himself, to exhaust all the possibilities of defense when the law lays its hand upon him. Avery did not do so, and his meek submission counted heavily against him. But let us consider that a little. You and Reynolds left the bungalow together, probably after the interview had added to your wrath against him, but you wished to renew the talk out of Avery's hearing and volunteered to guide Reynolds to the station where the Chicago train was to stop for him. You didn't go back, Mr. Tate——"

"Good God, I tell you I wasn't there! I can prove that I was in Louisville; I tell you——"

"We're coming back to your alibi in a moment," said the governor patiently. "We will assume—merely assume for the moment—that you said you would take the train with Reynolds and ride as far as Ashton, where the Midland crosses and you would get an early morning train home. Avery went to sleep at the bungalow wholly ignorant of what had happened; he was awakened in the morning with news that Reynolds had been killed by blows on the head inflicted near the big derrick where you and Reynolds—I am assuming again—had stopped to argue your grievances. Avery—shocked, dazed, not comprehending

his danger and lying there in the bungalow prostrated and half-crazed by the horror of the thing—waited: waited for the prompt help he expected from the only living person who knew that he had not left the bungalow. He knew you only as a kind, helpful friend, and I dare say at first he never suspected you! It was the last thing in the world he would have attributed to you, and the possibility of it was slow to enter his anxious, perturbed mind. He had every reason for sitting tight in those first hideous hours, confident that the third man at that bungalow gathering would come forward and establish his innocence with a word. As is the way in such cases, efforts were made to fix guilt upon others; but Avery, your friend, the man you had saved once, in a fine spirit of magnanimity, waited for you to say the word that would clear him. But you never said that word, Mr. Tate. You took advantage of his silence; a silence due, we will say, to shock and horror at the catastrophe and to his reluctance to believe you guilty of so monstrous a crime or capable of allowing him, an innocent man, to suffer the penalty for it."

Tate's big eyes were bent dully upon the governor. He averted his gaze slowly and reached for a glass of water, but his hand shook so that he could not lift it, and he glared at it as though it were a hateful thing.

"I wasn't there! Why——" he began with an effort at bravado; but the words choked him and he sat swinging his head from side to side and breathing heavily.

The governor went on in the same low, even tone he had used from the beginning:

"When Avery came to himself and you still were silent, he doubtless saw that, having arranged for you to meet Reynolds at the bungalow—Reynolds, who had been avoiding you—he had put himself in the position of an accessory before the fact and that even if he told the truth about your being there he would only be drawing you into the net without wholly freeing himself. At best it was an ugly business, and being an intelligent man he knew it. I gather that you are a secretive man by nature; the people who know you well in your own town say that of you. No one knew that you had gone there and the burden of the whole thing was upon Avery. And your tracks were so completely hidden: you had been at such pains to sneak down there to take advantage of the chance Avery made for you to see Reynolds and have it out with him about the creamery business, that suspicion never attached to you. You knew Avery as a good fellow, a little weak, perhaps, as you learned from that forgery of your name ten years earlier; and it would have been his word against yours. I'll say to you,

Mr. Tate, that I've lain awake nights thinking about this case, and I know of nothing more pitiful, my imagination can conjure nothing more horrible, than the silent suffering of George Avery as he waited for you to go to his rescue, knowing that you alone could save him."

"I didn't do it, I didn't do it!" Tate reiterated in a hoarse whisper that died away with a queer guttural sound in his throat.

"And now about your alibi, Mr. Tate: the alibi that you were never even called on to establish." The governor reached for the tablet and held it before the man's eyes, which focused upon it slowly, uncomprehendingly. "Now," said the governor, "you can hardly deny that you drew that sketch, for I saw you do it with my own eyes. I'm going to ask you, Mr. Tate, whether this drawing isn't also your work?"

He drew out the sheet of paper he had shown the others earlier in the evening and placed it beside the tablet. Tate jumped to his feet, staring wild-eyed, and a groan escaped him. The governor caught his arm and pushed him back into his chair.

"You will see that that is Avery's letterhead that was used in the quarry office. As you talked there with Reynolds that night you

played with a pencil as you did here a little while ago and without realizing it you were creating evidence against yourself that was all I needed to convince me absolutely of your guilt. I have three other sheets of Avery's paper bearing the same figure that you drew that night at the quarry office; and I have others collected in your own office within a week! As you may be aware, the power of habit is very strong. For years, no doubt, your subconsciousness has carried that device, and in moments of deep abstraction with wholly unrelated things your hand has traced it. Even the irregularities in the outline are identical, and the size and shading are precisely the same. I ask you again, Mr. Tate, shall I sign the pardon I brought here in my pocket and free George Avery?"

The sweat dripped from Tate's forehead and trickled down his cheeks in little streams that shone in the light. His collar had wilted at the fold, and he ran his finger round his neck to loosen it. Once, twice, he lifted his head defiantly, but, meeting the governor's eyes fixed upon him relentlessly, his gaze wavered. He thrust his hand under his coat and drew out his pencil and then, finding it in his fingers, flung it away, and his shoulders drooped lower.

III

Burgess stood by the window with his back to them. The governor spoke to him, and he nodded and left the room. In a moment he returned with two men and closed the door quickly.

"Hello, warden; sit down a moment, will you?"

The governor turned to a tall, slender man whose intense pallor was heightened by the brightness of his oddly staring blue eyes. He advanced slowly. His manner was that of a blind man moving cautiously in an unfamiliar room. The governor smiled reassuringly into his white, impassive face.

"I'm very glad to see you, Mr. Avery," he said. He rose and took Avery by the hand.

At the name Tate's head went up with a jerk. His chair creaked discordantly as he turned, looked up into the masklike face behind him, and then the breath went out of him with a sharp, whistling sound as when a man dies, and he lunged forward with his arms flung out upon the table.

The governor's grip tightened upon Avery's hand; there was something of awe in his tone when he spoke.

"You needn't be afraid, Avery," he said. "My way of doing this is a little hard, I know,

but it seemed the only way. I want you to tell me," he went on slowly, "whether Tate was at the bungalow the night Reynolds was killed. He *was* there, wasn't he?"

Avery wavered, steadied himself with an effort, and slowly shook his head. The governor repeated his question in a tone so low that Burgess and the warden, waiting at the window, barely heard. A third time he asked the question. Avery's mouth opened, but he only wet his lips with a quick, nervous movement of the tongue, and his eyes met the governor's unseeingly.

The governor turned from him slowly, and his left hand fell upon Tate's shoulder.

"If you are not guilty, Tate, now is the time for you to speak. I want you to say so before Avery; that's what I've brought him here for. I don't want to make a mistake. If you say you believe Avery to be guilty, I will not sign his pardon."

He waited, watching Tate's hands as they opened and shut weakly; they seemed, as they lay inert upon the table, to be utterly dissociated from him, the hands of an automaton whose mechanism worked imperfectly. A sob, deep, hoarse, pitiful, shook his burly form.

The governor sat down, took a bundle of papers from his pocket, slipped one from under the rubber band which snapped back sharply

into place. He drew out a pen, tested the point carefully, then, steadying it with his left hand, wrote his name.

"Warden," he said, waving the paper to dry the ink, "thank you for your trouble. You will have to go home alone. Avery is free."

IV

When Burgess appeared at the bank at ten o'clock the next morning he found his friends of the night before established in the directors' room waiting for him. They greeted him without their usual chaff, and he merely nodded to all comprehendingly and seated himself on the table.

"We don't want to bother you, Web," said Colton, "but I guess we'd all feel better if we knew what happened after we left you last night. I hope you don't mind."

Burgess frowned and shook his head.

"You ought to thank God you didn't have to see the rest of it! I've got a reservation on the Limited tonight: going down to the big city in the hope of getting it out of my mind."

"Well, we know only what the papers printed this morning," said Ramsay; "a very brief paragraph saying that Avery had been pardoned. The papers don't tell the story of his crime as they usually do, and we noticed

that they refrained from saying that the pardon was signed at one of your dinner parties."

"I fixed the newspapers at the governor's request. He didn't want any row made about it, and neither did I, for that matter. Avery is at my house. His wife was there waiting for him when I took him home."

"We rather expected that," said Colton, "as we were planted at the library windows when you left the club. But about the other man: that's what's troubling us."

"Um," said Burgess, crossing his legs and clasping his knees. "*That* was the particular hell of it."

"Tate was guilty; we assume that of course," suggested Fullerton. "We all saw him signing his death warrant right there at the table."

"Yes," Burgess replied gravely, "and he virtually admitted it; but if God lets me live I hope never to see anything like that again!"

He jumped down and took a turn across the room.

"And now—— After that, Web?"

"Well, it won't take long to tell it. After the governor signed the pardon I told the warden to take Avery downstairs and get him a drink: the poor devil was all in. And then Tate came to, blubbering like the vile coward he is, and began pleading for mercy: on his knees, mind you; on his *knees*! God! It was

horrible—horrible beyond anything I ever dreamed of—to see him groveling there. I supposed, of course, the governor would turn him over to the police. I was all primed for that, and Tate expected it and bawled like a sick calf. But what he said was—what the governor said was, and he said it the way they say 'dust to dust' over a grave—'You poor fool, for such beasts as you the commonwealth has no punishment that wouldn't lighten the load you've got to carry around with you till you die!' That's all there was of it! That's exactly what he said, and can you beat it? I got a room for Tate at the club, and told one of the Japs to put him to bed." "But the governor had no right," began Ramsay eagerly; "he had no *right*——" "The king can do no wrong! And, if you fellows don't mind, the incident is closed, and we'll never speak of it again."

H. C. WITWER

FOREWORD

I HAVE selected "Money to Burns" as my best effort because the situations and characters in that story appealed to me more than any others I've created in some three hundred odd yarns. The "gold-digging" young lady of the chorus, the super-sophisticated beliboy with his hard-boiled philosophy, and the beautiful, cynical Goddess of the Switchboard, are all familiars of mine. Intimate with their habits, characteristics, mannerisms and vocabulary, I had only to create a central plot and push them bodily into it. After that, writing the story was merely a case of conscientious reporting—it almost wrote itself!

The genesis of "Money to Burns" was some envious remarks of a bellboy in discussing the sensational escapades of a certain young millionaire. The boy, bringing ice water to my room in a hotel, pointed to the glaring headlines in a newspaper that told of the gilded youth's latest adventure, and bitterly bemoaned the fate that made him a bellboy and the other a millionaire. He discoursed on what he would do were he the possessor of wealth, etc. I encouraged his conversation, with a story forming itself before my eyes. When he left the room I put his counterpart on paper, gave him wealth, added the other characters and necessary embellishments, carved out the title which I hoped would attract the reader's interest and—there you are!

As to how I work—one word pretty well covers that question. The word is "HARD!" I try to get interesting characters and titles first of all; after that, plots. The characters are always people I know well. The plots may come from any source—things that have happened to me, a chance remark of some individual, a newspaper headline, an adventure I would relish having myself, etc.

To a beginner I would advise a thorough reading of the popular magazines, a shot at the newspaper game if possible, plenty of clean white paper and a resolution to take lots of punishment. That's all I would presume to advise—and I may have given an overdose already!

MONEY TO BURNS

By H. C. Witwer

"*When fortune favors a man too much, she makes him a fool!*"

Neither Napoleon, Nero, Alexander, Jack Johnson, Mark Antony nor Bill Hohenzollern was the composer of that remark, though, honest, I bet they all *thought* it about the time the world was giving them the air. However, the boy who originally pulled the above wise crack was Mr. Publius Syrus, a master mind current in dear old Syria during the fiscal year of 77 B.C. Two thousand annums after Publius gave up the struggle, Jimmy Burns, a professional bellhop—age, twenty; color, white; nationality, Broadway-American—decided to find out for himself whether or not Pubby's statement was true. It is! Loll back in the old easy chair for about approximately a half-hour and I'll do my stuff.

Perhaps you don't know me, as Eve coyly

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remarked to Adam, so taking advantage of your good nature I'll introduce myself. I'm Gladys Murgatroyd, a switchboard operator at the Hotel St. Moe. I was slipped into the cradle under the name of Mary Ellen Johnson, but as that smacks more of the kitchen than the drawing-room, I changed that label some time ago to the Gladys Murgatroyd thing, which I admit sounds phony—still, I'm a phone girl, so what could be sweeter?

However, one morning during a slight lull in the daily hostilities between me and the number-seeking guests, I am reading my favorite book—the *Morning Squawk,* the newspaper that made the expression "It is alleged" famous, or maybe it was the other way around. Spattered all over the front page is a highly sensational account of the latest adventures of one of these modern prodigal sons—in round numbers, Carlton Van Ryker, whose father celebrated his ninety-fifth birthday by entering a tomb in a horizontal position and leaving his only progeny two paltry $500,000 bank notes. The young millionaire with the name like a Pullman car and a soft collar had been stepping high, wide and fast with his pennies and at the time of going to press was the plot of an "alienation of my wife's affections" suit, a badly mismanaged shooting affair, and various other things that would keep his mind off the

weather for quite a spell. While I'm drinking all this in with my lustrous orbs, along comes Mons. James Joseph Aloysius Burns, who was either the hero of this episode in my exciting career, or else he wasn't.

Although I've known Jimmy Burns for the worst part of two years, we're still good friends, both of us being refugees from the land of Utah. My home town was the metropolis of Bountiful, where I once won a beauty contest single-handed, and James fled from Salt Lake City, where smoking cigarettes is the same as throwing rocks at the President, in the eyes of the genial authorities.

But to get to the business of the meeting—Jimmy sported a sarcastical sneer as he approached my switchboard on this particular morning.

"Kin you feature a cuckoo like this dizzy Van Ryker havin' all that sugar," he snorts, nodding angrily at the newspaper, "whilst us regular white folks is got to slave like Uncle Tom or we don't eat? Is that fair?"

"Cheer up, Jimmy," I says with a smile. "We don't get much money, that's a fact, but then we can laugh out loud. That's more than Van Ryker can do! Look at the pushing around he's getting because he hauled off and inherited a million, poor fellow; he——"

"That mug was ru'ned by too much jack!"

butts in Jimmy. "He's what you call a weak sister. He wasn't *built* to handle important money—you got to be *born* that way! Knowin' how to spend money is a gift. *I* got the gift, but I ain't got the money!"

"And you never *will* have the money, frittering away your life hopping bells in a hotel, Jamesy—not to give you a short answer," I says. "When they assembled you they left out the motor—*ambition!*"

"Blah!" says Jimmy courteously. "That's what *you* think. I got plenty ambition. My ambition is to wake up every morning for the rest of my life with a twenty-dollar bill in my kick! Believe me, Cutey, I often wish I was a Wall Street bond messenger, a bootlegger or even a professional reformer—but I ain't never had a shot at no *big* dough like that. Why, if it was rainin' tomato bouillon, I'd be there with a knife instead of a spoon!"

"As if *that* would stop you!" I remark sweetly. I once saw James eat. "It seems to me you're always craving excitement," I went on, dealing out some wrong numbers. "Only last week you told me you had a massage."

"Go ahead and kid me," says Jimmy. "*You* should bite your nails—you're a woman, a good looker with more curves than a scenic railway, and they ain't no way *you* kin lose! But it's different *here*. It seems to me I been

workin' for a livin' since the doc says 'It's a boy!' and the chances is I'll be workin' for a livin' till the doc says 'Get the embalmer'!"

Don't you love that?

"Why don't you check out of the bellhopping game and try your luck at something with a future in it?" I ask him, though, really, I'm about as interested in Jimmy's biography as I am in the election returns at Tokyo. "If *I* was a man, this town wouldn't have *me* licked!"

"Apple sauce!" sneers Jimmy politely. "A guy without money has got the same chance in New York as a ferryboat salesman would have on the Sara Desert. It takes jack to make jack. With a bank roll I could make *my* name as well known as Jonah's, and I'd spot him his whale!"

"What do you *do* with your nickels?" I ask him. "I don't doubt that Chaplin and Fairbanks get more *wages* than you bellboys, but I thought your *tips* ran into better figures than they have in the Follies."

"Say, cutey, be yourself!" says James scornfully. "Most of the eggs in this trap is as tight as the skin on a grape—they wouldn't give a thin dime to see Tut-ankh-Amen walk up Fifth Avenoo on his hands! I could be railroaded to Sing Sing for what I think of *them* babies. Why should *I* have to carry suitcases and hustle ice water for a lot of monkeys like that?"

"Don't put on dog, Jimmy," I smile. "The guests of the St. Moe are every bit as good as you are, even if you *are* a haughty bellhop and they are lowly millionaires. Suppose *you* had a million, what would you do with it?"

"Well," says Jimmy thoughtfully, "the first thing I'd do wouldst be to get me a education —not that I'm no dumb Isaac by no means, but they's a few lessons like algeometry, matriculation, mock geography and the like which I could use. *I* wouldn't get all tangled up with no wild women or pull none of the raw stuff which this Van Ryker jobbie done, that's a cinch! They'd be no horseplay what the so ever, as far as *I* was concerned. What *I'd* do wouldst be to crash into some business, make my pile and my name and not do no playin' around till I was about fifty and independent for life. Ain't it a crime when I got them kind of intentions to make good and no nonsense about it, that somebody don't slip me a million?"

"It's an outrage, Jimmy," I agree, allowing a giggle to break jail. "Still, all men are born equal and if it's actually possible that you *haven't* got a million, why, you must have thrown your chances away. When Eddie Windsor was your age, for instance, he had made himself Prince of Wales!"

"Me and him begin life in a different type

of cradle!" says Jimmy. "And that stuff about everybody bein' equal when they're born is the oyster's ice skates. The only way me and them wealthy millionaires was even at birth is that we was all babies!"

This debate between me and Jimmy was about like Adam and a monkey arguing over which of 'em was our first ancestor—we could have found plenty of people to side with both of us. Then again, the customers was beginning to snap into it for the day and craved the voice with the smile. I got as busy at the switchboard as a custard pie salesman on a movie comedy lot, so I gave the money-mad James the air for the time being.

A couple of weeks later, or maybe it was a jolly old fortnight, Hon. Guy Austin Tower returns from a voyage to Europe, and then the fun began! Maybe you all haven't had the unusual pleasure of meeting my boy friend, so with your kind permission I'll introduce him.

This handsome young metropolitan sheik is a millionaire of the first water, a full-blooded playwright, one of my wildest admirers, and a guest at the Hotel St. Moe. Guy would be a face card in any deck—he's a real fellow, no fooling. Even the parboiled Jimmy Burns, who thinks everybody guilty till proved innocent, is one of Guy's fans. Guy just sprays Jimmy and the rest of the hired help with princely

tips and doesn't dime them to death, as most of the other inmates do.

Like Carlton Van Ryker, Guy was left about everything but Lake Michigan when his male parent entered the obituary column, but *unlike* Van Ryker, Guy didn't let his millions make him a clown. He wanted to carve his own way on our popular planet, so he simply forgot about his warehouse full of doubloons and took up the trade of writing plays. As he's got two frolics running on Broadway now, you could hardly call him a bust.

Well, when Guy came back from overseas he got a welcome from the St. Moe staff that would have tickled a political boss. Honestly, he brought something back for everybody! What he brought back for *me* was some perfectly gorgeous Venetian lace and his sixty-fifth request that I renounce the frivolous pleasures of the telephone switchboard and enter matrimony.

I accepted the lace, which drove my girl friend, Hazel Killian, wild with envy, but on the wedding bells I claimed exemption. I like Guy, but I'm by no means in love with him—or with anyone else! From what I've been able to observe on my perch at the St. Moe switchboard, there's a bit too much "moan" in matrimony, and, really, I get no more thrill out of contemplating marriage than Noah would get

out of contemplating Niagara Falls. I've seen too much of it! I do get a kick, though, out of my daily struggle to remain a campfire girl and still keep from dying of too little fun. The swarming lobby of any costly Gotham hotel is the favorite hunting grounds of snips that pass in the night, always looking for the best of it —lounge lizards, synthetic sheiks of all ages and others too humorous to mention. Any young, well dressed member of my much advertised sex who doesn't resemble a gorilla is their legitimate prey, and trying to discourage 'em is like trying to discourage the anti-drys. But I got their number—being a phone girl, that's my job, isn't it? I meet five hundred representatives of the sillier sex every day, and it's a hobby of mine to treat 'em all with equal chilly politeness till they get out of line. Then I turn off the politeness, just giving 'em the chill, and honest, when I want to be cold—which is generally—I'd turn a four-alarm fire into an iceberg with a glance!

However, there are a lot of yawns connected with plugging a telephone switchboard day by day in every way, and now and then a male will come along sufficiently interesting for little Gladys to accept temporarily as an accomplice in the assassination of time.

Dinners, dances, theaters, this and that—

nothing my mother and I couldn't laugh over, so don't curl your lip!

Well, Guy Tower hadn't been back in the St. Moe a week when he began showering attentions on me from the point where he left off before he sailed away. Honestly, he dinnered and theatered me silly! Hazel Killian watched me carelessly toy with this good-looking young gold mine with unconcealed feelings of covetousness. She simply couldn't understand why I didn't grab this boon from Heaven and marry him while he was stupefied with my charms. Hazel, who is an artists' model and no eyesore herself, is suffering from a lifelong ambition to become a bird in a gilded cage. She craves a millionaire, and in desperation she offered to match coins with me for Guy, but I indignantly refused. I *know* Hazel—she's a dear, but she'd have Rockefeller penniless in a month and every shop on Fifth Avenue sporting a "Closed to Restock" sign. She's just a pretty baby who loves to go buy buy and she makes 'em give till it hurts, don't think she doesn't!

Another person who got upset over Guy's inability to keep away from me was Jerry Murphy, house sleuth at the St. Moe. Jerry's so big that if he had numbers on him he'd look like a box car, and he's just another male I can get all dizzied up with a properly manipulated

eye and smile. Really, he's not a bad fellow, but as a detective he's a blank cartridge. He couldn't catch pneumonia if it was against the law not to have it. Jerry don't know what it's all about and never will, because he's too thick between the ears to ask and nobody will tell him. He hangs around my switchboard like a hungry collie around a kitchen and he's just as eager; but I'm not collecting losers, so Jerry's meaningless to *me*. My bounding around with Guy fills Jerry with pain and alarm and he keeps me supplied with laughs by constantly warning me of the pitfalls and temptations that surround a little telephone girl who steps out with a millionaire. "If 'at big mock orange makes one out-of-the-way crack to you, cutey, just tip me off and I'll *ruin* him!" says Jerry with a menacing growl. "I can't cuddle up to the idea of you goin' out with him all the time. Don't let him go to work and lure you somewheres away from easy callin' distance of help!"

"Cut yourself a piece of cake!" I says. "Mister Tower is a perfect gentleman, Jerry, and it would be impossible for him to act like anything else if he and I were alone on an island in the middle of the Pacific."

"Say, listen, cutey," says Jerry, wincing, "don't mention 'at alone-on-a-island stuff in *my* presence! 'At's what I been dreamin' about

me and you for a year. If we ever get on a ship together, I'll wreck it as sure as you're born!"

Now, isn't he a scream?

Well, at one of our dinner dates about a month after his return, Guy shows up haggard and wan and apparently all in. Generally a fellow who couldn't do enough for his stomach, he ordered this night with the enthusiasm of a steak fiend week-ending at a vegetarian friend's. When the nourishment arrived, Guy just dallied and toyed with it. Afterwards we favored the dance floor with a visit, and instead of tripping his usual wicked ballroom he acted like he had an anvil in each of his pumps. A dozen times during the evening he had to tap back a yawn, and really I began to get steamed up. I'm not used to seeing my boy friends pass out on me!

"I hope I'm not keeping you awake, Mr. Tower," I remarked frigidly as we returned to our table and the nineteenth yawn slipped right through his fingers, in spite of his well meant attempt to push it back.

"Forgive me!" says Guy quickly, and a flush brings some color to his face for the first time that night. "I—the fact is, Gladys, I don't believe I've had a dozen hours' sleep in the past week!"

"Then you've been cheating," I smile, "for

you've always left *me* around midnight. Is she a blonde or a brunette, or have you noticed?"

Guy laughs and, leaning over, pats my hand.

"As if I would ever notice *any* girl but you!" he says, getting daringly original. "Oh, it isn't a girl, Gladys—though there *is* a woman at the bottom of the thing, at that. I'll explain that paradoxical statement. Rosenblum wants my next play to open his new Thalia Theater, which will be completed within two months—and I haven't the ghost of an idea, not the semblance of a plot! I've paced the floor like a caged animal, smoking countless cigarettes and drinking oceans of black coffee. I've written steadily for hours at a stretch and then torn the whole business up in disgust. That's what's kept me awake at night—that and my daily battles with this infernal Rosenblum!"

"How come?" I ask him in surprise. "I don't see the percentage in battling with the man who puts your plays on Broadway, Guy."

"He wants me to write a risqué farce, one of those loathsome—er—pardon me—bedroom things for Yvette D'Lys," says Guy angrily, "and I ab-so-lute-ly will not do it! I refuse to prostitute my art for the sordid box office! I——"

"Hold everything!" I butt in. "Shakespeare wasn't below writing bedroom farces, and I

think even *you'll* admit that he got some favorable mention as a playwright."

"Shakespeare write a bedroom farce!" gasps Guy. "Why, my dear girl, you—which of his marvelous plays could you *possibly* twist into that?"

"Othello," I says promptly. "In act five they clown all over the boudoir! You should go to the theater oftener."

For a second Guy looks puzzled, then he grins and the lines around his navy-blue eyes relax.

"You are delightful," he says. "If I cannot get mental stimulus from *you*, then I am indeed uninspired! Nevertheless, I am not going to do as Rosenblum requests. I have never written anything salacious or even suggestive, and I never will! Furthermore, I don't believe Miss D'Lys or *any* actress likes to play that kind of a part. It is managers of the Rosenblum type that force those rôles on them—callous, dollar-grabbing, cynical pessimists, who take it for granted that all women are bad!"

"Any man who takes it for granted that all women are bad is no pessimist, Guy," I says thoughtfully. "He's an optimist!"

"Great!" says Guy, slapping the table with his hand. "May I use that epigram in my play?"

"I'll loan it to you," I tell him. "If I break

out with the writing rash myself some day, I'll want it back. And now let me hear some of the ideas you tore up in disgust—maybe one of them is the real McCoy. Trot 'em out and I'll give you my honest opinion."

Well, he did and I did. Guy rattled off a half-dozen plots, which failed to thicken and merely sickened. Honestly, they had everything in 'em but the Battle of Gettysburg, and really they were fearful—about as new and exciting as a beef stew, which is just what I told him, being a truthful girl.

Guy sighs and looks desperate.

"Gladys," he says, "I simply *must* have a play ready to open the Thalia in less than eight weeks! You know that my interest in playwriting is anything but mercenary—good heavens, I have more money than I know what to do with. What I want is to see my name on another Broadway success, and I'm absolutely barren of ideas! I've simply struck a dry spell, such as all writers do, occasionally. At this moment I'd give twenty-five thousand dollars for an original plot!"

I drew a deep breath and stared at him.

"Don't kid about that kind of money, Guy," I says solemnly. "And—don't tempt me!"

"I never was more serious in my life!" he quickly assures me. "Why, have *you* an idea?

By Jove, Gladys, if you *have*—if you are the goddess from the machine——"

"Be of good cheer," I interrupt. "I'll go home and sleep over matters, which is what *you* better do, too—you look like you fell out of a well or something, really! I'll see you tomorrow. I don't think I'll have a plot for you by then, but——"

"Naturally—still, if you even have a suggestion that I might use," says Guy eagerly, "I——"

"I say I don't *think* I'll have a plot by then, I *know* I'll have one!" I finish.

And I did, really!

When I got home that night I went right to bed, but somehow Mr. Slumber and me couldn't seem to come to terms. My brain just refused to call it a union day but kept mulling over Guy and his magnanimous offer of twenty-five thousand lire for a plot. Good heavens, he could buy a plot with a house and barn on it for that! Then my half-sleepy mind turns to Jimmy Burns, the gloomy bellhop, whose deathless ambition is to corral a fortune and dumfound Europe with his progress from then on. Suddenly these two trains of thought collide with a crash and out of the wreck comes an idea that I think will make Jimmy Burns famous and give Guy Tower his play! That trifling matter

being all settled, I turned over and slept the sleep of the just.

The very next evening I propositioned Guy, who listened with flattering attention. After telling him I had his play all set, I furnished him with a short but interesting description of the life, habits and desires of James Joseph Aloysius Burns. I then proposed that Guy place his twenty-five thousand to the bellboy's credit for one month, James to be allowed free rein with the jack. If Burns has increased the amount at the end of thirty days, he is to return the original twenty-five thousand to Guy. If not, he must give back whatever amount he has left. All the principals are to be sworn to secrecy and that's all there is to my scheme—it's as simple as the recipe for hot chocolate!

"If Jimmy Burns is really miscast in life and has a brain and business ability far above hopping bells," I explain, "why, the use of twenty-five thousand for thirty days might make him one of the world's most famous men! It's a sporting chance, Guy—will you gamble?"

Guy looks somewhat perplexed. He stares into my excited face and clears his throat nervously.

"Well—I—of course, I am interested in *anything* you suggest, Gladys," he says. "I—eh—suppose I am unusually stupid this evening,

but I cannot see how my dowering this bellboy will assist me in writing my play."

"Listen," I says. "You claimed you'd put out twenty-five thousand for a plot, didn't you? Well, believe me, the movements of Jimmy Burns with twenty-five thousand dollars to do what he wants with will supply all the ideas you can handle—if you don't think so, you're crazy!"

"But——" begins Guy.

"Don't butt!" I cut him off, impatiently. "You're not the goat yet and you won't be if you listen to teacher. All you have to do is give Jimmy the sugar, watch his stuff for the next thirty days, and you'll get a true-to-life masterpiece for your drama—probably a play that will show the making of a financial, scientific or artistic Napoleon! If you can't get a play out of the effect of sudden wealth on a lowly bellhop, then you got no business in the same room with a typewriter!"

Guy rubs his chin, smooths back his wavy hair and gazes out of the window at New York City.

"By Jove!" he busts out suddenly, slapping his hands together. "The thing is fantastic—grotesque—but I'll do it!"

So it came to pass that the next day Guy, Jimmy Burns, and myself met by appointment in the cashier's office of the Plumbers &

Physicians National Bank. As I was on my lunch hour and minutes were at a premium, there was little time squandered on preliminaries, Guy making his proposition to the thunderstruck James in simple words of one syllable. At first M. Burns refused to believe he wasn't being kidded, then he got hysterical with delight. When the startled cashier solemnly asked for his signature and handed him a bank book showing there was $25,000 to his credit in the vaults, Jimmy broke down and cried like a baby!

"Now listen to me, young man," I tell the panting Burns when he has hid the bank book in his shoe to the open amusement of Guy and the wondering cashier. "You want to get an immediate rush of brains to the head and make that twenty-five thousand *mean* something, because that's the last you get if you cry your eyes out! That's all there is, there isn't any more, get me? You been going around squawking about what a world-beater you'd be if you had money. Well, now you got plenty of it and we look for big things from you. No clowning, remember, you *must* make good! Is all that clear?"

Still in a happy trance, Jimmy Burns removes his cap with a start.

"Ye-ye-yes, ma'am!" he gulps, the first time he was ever polite to anyone, before or since.

Well, really, the effect of that $25,000 suddenly showered on Jamesy was every bit as startling as I expected—only in a slightly different way than I fondly hoped! Those pennies went right to his shapely head, and instead of stimulating his brain, why, they just *removed* it altogether. First of all, Jimmy got a wild and uncontrollable desire to leave the art of bellhopping flat on its back. Not satisfied to resign his portfolio in a dignified way, he kidded the guests, insulted the manager, rode Jerry Murphy till Jerry wanted his heart, and wound up by punching Pete Kift, the bell captain, right on the nose. By an odd coincidence, these untoward actions got Jimmy the gate.

The plutocrat bellhop's next imitation was to apply for the most expensive suite in the hotel. They just laughed Hon. Burns off, telling him there was nothing but standing room left in the inn and try to get *that!* But Guy Tower came to the rescue and got Jimmy the suite, as Guy wanted to keep his experiment under as close observation as possible while making notes for his play. Once settled in his gorgeous apartment, Jimmy swelled up like a mump and run his former colleagues ragged getting him ice water, stationery, telegram blanks and drug-store gin. He staggered around in the most fashionable lobby in New

York making cracks like "Hey, d'ye think Prohibition will ever come back?" to astounded millionaires and their ladies. Honestly, he was a wow! When one of the fellows he used to work with called him "Jimmy," the nee bellboy angrily insists that the manager fire him for undue familiarity, remarking, "A guy has got to keep them servants in their proper places!"

He sent a wire to the Standard Oil Company asking if they couldn't use a younger man in Rockefeller's place, paid the dinge elevator pilots a dollar twenty times a day to stop the car and tie his shoe laces, panicked the highest priced tailor in Manhattan by ordering seven suits of "mufti," having read that the King of England occasionally dresses in that, and generally misplayed his hand till everybody was squawking and in no time at all Jimmy Burns was about as popular as a mad dog in the St. Moe hotel. He failed to go through college like he promised he would, but he certainly went through everything else, and only for Guy, Jimmy would have been streeted fifty times a day!

The next desire that attacks James is the ambition to see his name in the newspapers, so he advertises for a press agent. The first publicity purveyor who showed up made James think he was good by using nothing but adjectives in his conversation and asking for a hon-

orarium of $250 the week. Mr. Burns thought the salary was more than reasonable, but as he's the type that would ask President Coolidge for a reference, he demanded one from the candidate for the job. "You have asked the man who owns one—just a minute!" says the press agent cheerily, and not at all abashed he dashes out of the room. I heard all this when he stopped at my switchboard with Jimmy and asked me where the writing room was. In five minutes he's back, waving a paper in Jimmy's face. "Look *that* over!" he says.

James read it out loud for my entertainment. According to this testimonial, the bearer had did about everything in the publicity line but act as press representative for a school where middle-aged eagles are taught how to fly. James seems to get quite a kick out of it.

"I think I'll take this guy," he remarks, as he looks up from the reference.

"Fine!" says the delighted applicant. "That's a good thought. I'll snap right into it and——"

"Tomato sauce!" butts in James sneeringly. "I don't wish no part of *you,* the baby *I* want to hire is the bozo which wrote this recommendation of you. He's good, what I mean, a letter-writin' idiot!"

"A bit odd that we should both be thinking the same thing," says Mr. Press Agent coolly.

"As a matter of fact, I wrote that recommendation myself. So now that I'm engaged as your publicity expert, let me have a few of your photos and——"

The following morning nearly every front page in town displayed a picture of James Burns and this glaring headline:

BELL BOY LEFT MILLION BY GUEST HE ONCE LOANED DIME!

That was the press agent's first effort and, as far as *I* was ever able to see, his last. But it got ample results, as with your permission I'll be glad to show you.

Within a week, Jimmy Burns had discovered what millions have discovered before *his* little day—that the mere possession of lucre does not mean happiness, and for some it means positive misery! Not only did James become the prey of the charity solicitors, confidence workers, stock swindlers, "yes men," phony promoters and other parasites that infest the hotel, but he was constantly in boiling water through his cuckoo escapades growing out of sudden wealth that sent his brains on location. After purchasing a diamond as big as Boston, only brighter, he bought the highest priced horseless carriage he could find in the market and the same identical day it slipped out of his hands and tried to climb the steps of the Fifth

Avenue library. The gendarmes pinched him for reckless driving, though Jimmy protested that it wasn't really "wreckless" as he had plenty wreck, and his worship tossed the trembling James into the hoosegow for three days, remarking, "I'll teach you rich men a lesson!" Then the income-tax beagles read that newspaper headline and came down on Burns like a cracked ceiling. So all in all, Jimmy was finding few chuckles connected with his pieces of eight.

When the rich but unhappy James got out of the Bastille, he decided to throw a party in his costly suite at the St. Moe for his former associates of the bellhops' bench. As Jimmy confided to me, apparently his only friend, he felt the immediate need of mixing with people who spoke his language. He wanted to forget his troubles and get back on a friendly footing with the boys, who had severed diplomatic relations with him on account of his acting like he was Sultan of Goitre or something when he became a thousandaire overnight. Jimmy felt that a first-class soiree would do the trick.

The party came off as advertised, but all it meant to the poor little rich man was more grief! It was really a respectable enough affair, no hats being broken or that sort of thing, and a pleasant time was had by all with the

slight exception of the charming host. Our hero made two fatal mistakes. The first was not inviting Jerry Murphy and the second was laying in a stock of canny Scotch for medicinal purposes, in case any of his guests should get stricken with the dread disease of thirst. The result was that an epidemic of parched throats broke out early in the evening and pretty soon the other habitues of the St. Moe began complaining bitterly about the unusually boisterous race riot that was being staged with a top-heavy cast on the sixth floor. Mr. Williams, the manager, who liked Jimmy Burns and arsenic the same way, called upon Jerry Murphy to quell the disturbance and Jerry licked his lips with delight. The man-mountain house detective run all the way upstairs, figuring the elevators too slow to whisk him to a job as tasty to him as cream is to puss. Jerry pounded on the door of Jimmy's salon and demanded admittance. Recognizing his voice, James climbed unsteadily on a chair, opened the transom and peered with a rolling eye at Jerry.

"Go roll yer hoop—hic—you big shtiff, thish is gen'lemen's—hic—gen'lemen's blowout!" says Jimmy, carelessly pouring a pitcher of water, cracked ice and all, on Jerry's noble head. "Hic—shee kin you laugh *that off!*"

Foaming at the mouth and uttering strange cries, the infuriated Jerry broke through the

door and the panic was on! The beauty and chivalry present fled before the charging sleuth like they'd flee before a charging hippo, but the unfortunate Jimmy got left at the post. After cuffing him around the room till the sport palled on him, Jerry dragged James off to durance vile and once again Jamesy is put under glass, this time credited with illegally possessing spirits frumenti. They held him under lock and key all night and it took all of Guy Tower's influence and quite a few of his quarters to get Jerry to withdraw the charge and free Jimmy the next morning.

Well, honestly, I felt sorry for Jimmy Burns, who was certainly taking cruel and unusual punishment and being made to like it. I thought perhaps if I injected a lady into the situation it might make things a bit more pleasant for him, so I introduced Hazel Killian to the "millionaire bellboy," as the newspapers were still calling James. *O sole mia!* as they say in Iowa, what an off day my brain was having when it cooked up *that* idea! With visions clouding her usually painstaking taste, of the Riviera, Paris, Monte Carlo, gems, yachts, Boles-Joyce limousines or what have you, Hazel took to Jimmy like a goldfish takes to a bowl and our evening expeditions now consisted of your correspondent and Guy, assisted by Hazel and Jimmy. We went everywhere

together, with James insisting upon paying most of the bills. But while Jimmy was civil enough to the easy-to-look-at Hazel, he simply showered his attentions on your little friend Gladys, grabbing every chance to make the most violent love to me. This greatly annoyed Guy and Hazel and equally greatly amused *me*—Jimmy was just a giggle to me, not a gasp!

In the meanwhile, Mr. Williams and Jerry Murphy had banded together to make James sick and tired of living in the Hotel St. Moe. He seldom found his room made up, there was always something wrong with the lights, the water and the steam, none of the help would answer his bells, and when he hollered for service he was told he would find it in the dictionary under S. But Pete Kift pulled the worst trick of all on him. With the radiant Hazel on his arm and Guy keeping military distance behind, Jimmy was proudly strutting through the lobby one fine evening. All were resplendent in evening clothes, and to show you I'm not catty I'll say that Hazel in an evening gown would attract attention away from the Yosemite. As the party neared the desk, Pete Kift suddenly looks at Jimmy and bawls *"Front!"* at the top of his bull elephant's voice, and mechanically responding to the habit of a lifetime, poor Jimmy Burns grabs an amazed guest's suitcase

and hastily starts for the elevator! The witnesses just screamed when they grasped the situation and recognized James as the ex-bellhop. Even Guy smiled, but it was different with Hazel, who could have shot down Mr. Burns on the spot in cold blood. As for Jimmy, well, honestly, he would have welcomed the bullet!

Nevertheless, in spite of this fox pass Hazel believed Jimmy had actually inherited an even million, and evidently James had not gone out of his way to make her think different. So one day Hazel tells me she's all through posing for artists and is determined to make Jimmy her very own. When she adds that he has sworn to star her in a musical comedy or back her in a movie production, I nearly passed out! Can you imagine Jimmy, with only a few thousand left, making any such maniacal promises as that to a girl with a memory like Hazel's? *Oo la la,* what a fine disturbance James was readying himself for!

As I had vowed to say nothing about how Jimmy got his bankroll, I couldn't very well give the ambitious Hazel the lowdown on matters, but I *did* try most earnestly to lay her off him. I got nowhere! Refusing to be warned, Hazel point-blankly accused me of having a yen for Jimmy myself, and then she set sail for this gilded youth in dead earnest.

Well, knowing nothing of Hazel's plans with regard to himself, the doomed Jimmy kept on entertaining like his first name was Astor, his middle name Vanderbilt and his last name Morgan. He took me, Hazel and Guy to the races at Belmont Park and stabled us all in a box. As James had loudly declared that he knew more about horses than Vincent Ibanez, we all played his feed-box tips for five races and we learned about losers from him. When the sixth and last scramble arrived, Guy had donated $1,500, I had sent in $50, and Hazel had parted with $80 to the oral books and was fit to be tied! What Jimmy lost, nobody knows. Anyhow, he gazed over the program for the sixth race, a mile handicap, and suddenly let out a yell.

"Hot dog!" he says, much excited. "Here's where we all get independent for life. They's a beagle in this dash by the name of Bellhop and if that ain't a hunch then Pike's Peak's a pimple. Get down on this baby with the family jools and walk outa here rancid with money!"

We split a contemptuous grin between us and presented it to Jimmy before getting down on the favorite in a last attempt to break even on the day. Jimmy milled his way back to our box, flushed and panting, and gayly announced that he had shot the works on Bellhop's nose.

He said we were all paranoiacs for not doing the same. Well, it was all over in a twinkling! The favorite found the handicap of our bets a bit too much and finished an even last. Bellhop tripped the mile in something like 0.96 and won from here to the Ruhr, clicking off $15,000 for Mr. James Joseph Aloysius Burns. James then announced his intention of buying the horse and presenting it to Hazel for Arbor Day, and it was only with the greatest of difficulty that me and Guy talked him out of it. Hazel gave us a murderous glare and for the rest of the day you couldn't have got a nail file between her and Jimmy, honestly!

Whirling back to New York in Jimmy's car, now steered by a uniformed chauffeur, I began to reprove James for this gambling and stepping out when he should be using his money and time to secure his future. What about all his promises to me? How about all the big things he was going to do? When was he going to enter business, or whatever he thought he could do best?

"Don't make me laugh!" says Jimmy, tapping an imported cigarette on a solid gold case. "I'm sittin' pretty. What a sucker *I'd* be to pester myself about work when I got all this sugar!"

"Of course," says Hazel, nestling closer to him. "Imagine a millionaire *working!*"

And the only thing that really burned me up was Jimmy's grin at Guy and the sly dig in the ribs he gave *me*, the little imp!

Well, from then on Jimmy had lots of luck and all of it bad. The fellow who invented money was a clever young man, but he really should have stayed around the laboratory for another couple of hours and invented an antidote for the trouble it brings. The well-to-do ex-bellhop used his jack as a wedge to get into one jam after another, till finally came the worst blow of all, and Miss Hazel Killian delivered it.

It seems that Hazel got fatigued waiting for Jimmy to unbelt the roll and star her in a musical comedy or a super-production, so she requested a showdown. Jimmy checked up and discovered he had blown all but about five thousand of his ill-gotten gains, and as trustworthy reports had reached him that it would take about ten times that much to group a show around the beauteous Hazel, he calmly told her all bets were off. Hazel promptly fainted, but Jimmy's idea of first aid being an alarmed glance and a dash for the door, she quickly snapped out of it and demanded ten thousand dollars for the time she put in entertaining him.

"Aha—a gold digger, hey?" says Jimmy indignantly. "So you wish ten grand for entertainin' me? Where d'ye get that stuff? They

ain't no ten thousand dollars' worth of laughs in you for *me*, I'll tell the world! Take the air!"

Infuriated beyond speech, Hazel brought suit for $100,000 against James the following day, charging that promising young man had promised to wed her. Further, deponent sayeth not!

That was the end of the high life for Jimmy Burns. Honestly, he was scared stiff and he got little comfort from *me*, for I was absolutely disgusted with the way he had carried on from the time Guy gave him that money. Opportunity had knocked on this little fool's door and he had pretended he wasn't at home. Not only that, but I felt he had got me in wrong with Guy Tower, whose $25,000 investment for a plot now seemed a total loss. I told Guy tearfully how sorry I was that my scheme had failed to pan out, but he cut me off in the middle of my plea for forgiveness, his face a mass of smiles.

"My dear girl, you owe me no apology," says Guy, patting my shoulder. "It is I who owe you a debt of gratitude. I've written a farce-comedy around Jimmy's adventures with the twenty-five thousand, and Rosenblum predicts it will be the hit of the season! I've never seen him so enthusiastic. Your idea was more than successful, and Jimmy is welcome to what-

ever he has left of the money when the time limit expires!"

Wasn't that lovely?

In the meantime, the miserable Jimmy had tried to forget his worries again by mixing with his former fellow workmen about the hotel. Jerry Murphy and Pete Kift wouldn't give him a tumble, so he sat on the bellhops' bench all night, trying to square things with his ex-playmates. But now that he was a "millionaire" they put on the ice and treated him like a maltese would be treated at a mouse's reception. A great longing comes over Jimmy to be a care-free bellboy again, without the burden of wealth. He felt the irresistible call of the ice water, the stationery and the tip! So, unable to lick the temptation, he sneaked the baggage of a few guests upstairs and was promptly run out of the hotel by the other boys for poaching on their preserves. To make things perfect, a couple of days later he was served with the papers in Hazel's suit.

Unable to cope with the situation and hysterical with fear, Jimmy rushed to the switchboard and made an appeal to me that would have melted a Chinese executioner. He placed the blame for the trouble he was in on my georgetted shoulders—manlike—and insisted that I had to get him out of the mess. The legal documents Hazel had him tagged with

smacked to the terrified Jimmy of pitiless judges, stern juries, jail—perhaps even the gallows! Honestly, James was in fearful shape, no fooling. I shut off his moans finally, and told him to get rid of whatever money he had left and I would take on myself the horrible job of explaining everything to Hazel. With a wild whinny, Jimmy dashed out of the hotel without even thanking me, gambled his remaining ducats in one wild stock-market plunge —and two days later the ticker informed him that he was worth $25,000 again!

But money was now smallpox to Jimmy Burns. It was just three weeks and four days since Guy Tower gave him the original $25,000, and under the agreement Jimmy still had three days left to splurge. Nothing stirring! What he wanted to do now was to get rid of his wealth, as I had told him Hazel's barristers would never let her sue him should they find out the defendant had no more nickels. Jimmy wanted to go to law with Hazel the same way he wanted to part with his ears, so he busts in on Guy and tells him to take back his gold because he don't wish any part of it. Before the astonished Guy can open his mouth, Jimmy hurls twenty-five one-thousand-dollar bills on the table and flees the room!

Well, being an important customer of the St. Moe, Guy got Jimmy back his old job

hopping bells, broke, but happy for the first time in a month. Then Guy insisted on me accepting a small royalty from his play for producing Jimmy Burns as the plot. That left everybody taken care of but the raging Hazel, who declared herself off me for life and was packed and ready to leave me alone in New York. Guy solved that problem and made Hazel crazily happy by engaging her to play *herself* in his comedy, "Money to Burns." Merry Flag Day!

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Long, Ray

My story that I like best.

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